

# Through Pastures Green

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Lula M. Dudley



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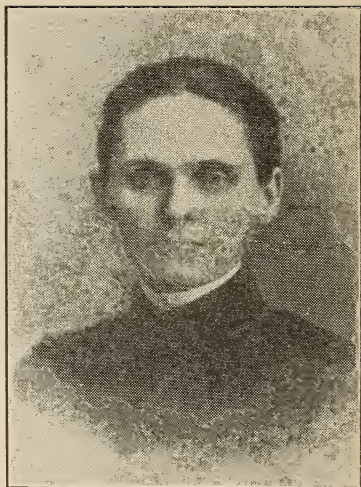
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MRS. LULA M. DUDLEY.

THROUGH  
*Pastures Green*

By

MRS. LULA M. DUDLEY

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By Mrs. Lula M. Dudley





*With a deep, loving and prayerful  
interest in the welfare of my grand-  
children, I dedicate to them this book.*

## PREFACE.

One day, a shepherd lad was seeking water for his flock, when he struck a rock from the mountain side with his staff, and a little stream burst forth and ran sparkling and leaping down into the vale below.

It ran on and on until it came to a large stone. It said, "Oh! stone, go with me." But the hard old stone moved not. The little stream threw all its force against it, but to no avail.

The clouds looking down, had pity for the little stream; and opening their windows, sent forth a shower of rain. This so enlarged the stream, as to divide it into two arms, which wound themselves about the stone—hugging it in a loving embrace.

Ever and anon, as the stone thus lay in the bosom of the stream a soft little voice kept saying, "Oh! Stone, go with me."

The cloud had pity again, sending more showers till the increased power, and gentle loving persuasion of the little stream

*conquered* and the stone yielded, falling over into the cooling waters below.

Now, the little birds, perching on the branches of the trees near by, sing as they dip their bills into the clear water flowing so peacefully over its rocky bottom. School children returning home, refresh themselves; and thirsty cattle, slowly wending their way homeward from green pastures, slake their thirst in the cool waters.

L. M. D.



## THROUGH PASTURES GREEN.

### CHAPTER I.

Browse Hill, April 12, 18—  
Mrs. Lucy Grey:

Dear Aunt:—I must tell you of the greatest joy that has ever come into my life. One of the best men in all the world, Mr. Harry Holcomb, has asked me to become his wife. I have not answered him yet, because I wanted to know what mama thought of it first. You know I would never think of going against her wishes—no never—But when I told her and showed her Harry's letter, she kissed me with tears in her eyes and said she knew of no one to whom she would more willingly give me than him, if I must leave her at all. Papa is also willing because he knows Harry is so noble and good.

Poor Harry! When I think of his beautiful little valley home, looking so lonely and desolate; and he the sole occupant, no doubt lonely too, I feel so

grateful to God that He is giving me a mission to do in making it bright; and if love can do that, it will surely beam with sunshine.

Now auntie, please don't think I am smitten with a romantic fever, for I am not. Precious mama taught me long ago that love was not a romance, but a gift of God. I am sure I today realize the truth of the lesson.

This reminds me, that I must not close my letter before telling you something of the state of my soul since I joined the ranks of the redeemed. I am still trying, in my poor weak way, to follow Jesus; and at times I feel He is more than life to me. Mama smiles and shakes her head. She says one must be crucified with Christ to the world before He can be more than life to them. Precious mama! she knows far better than I, what it takes to be a wholly sanctified Christian; for I know she walks in a more sacred nearness with God than I have ever done. But what it is that I am not willing to sacrifice for His sake, or what talent I am withholding from His service

that I too, might have this great salvation, I am sure I cannot tell. Perhaps God will show it to me some day, and when He does, I must yield it up at once, for this is the cry of my heart:

“Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole,  
I want Thee forever to dwell in my soul.  
Break down every idol, cast out every foe,  
And wash me and I shall be whiter than  
snow.”

April 13.—Oh! auntie, I know what it is now. God has shown it to me even sooner than I expected. Yes, I know what it is that I'm not willing to sacrifice for Jesus' sake, and what talent I would withhold from His service. Indeed, it is so plain to my spiritual vision now, and so sensible to my conscience-smitten soul, that my heart is broken—bleeding—dying.

But I will begin at the first and tell you all. Oh! pray for me, for my soul is in great agony—yes, full of trouble.

Last evening, dear mama received a dangerous hurt from a fall she had in passing from the back gallery to the

kitchen. This morning papa sent for me in haste. I went; and oh! how shall I write it down? I found her sinking fast after having given birth to a helpless babe.

Oh! this awful and unexpected blow of having to give up my precious mama! My very heart is rent in twain at the thought. And I must give up Harry too, and devote my life to those she leaves behind. This is her wish I know; for as soon as I entered her room this morning, and saw the pallor of death on her dear, sweet face, this conviction was stamped at once on my soul. It became more fixed and settled there, as poor, sweet mama placed her hand on the sleeping infant at her side, and turning with a most beseeching look to me, commended it to my care. But all at once, as she seemed to recollect, an expression of holy calm settled upon her features and she murmured almost inaudibly, for she was sinking fast, "No, dear child—nothing at all—Harry—be happy with him."

I fell on my knees beside her, and burying my face in the bedclothes, cried



till it seemed my heart would break. I could not speak one word, not even in prayer; and knelt there in this state until a deathly stillness reigned throughout the room. I looked up and all had left but old Aunt Rachie, the colored woman, and she was closing mama's eyes, for she was gone.

"Poor child!" she said, "don't take it so hard, for your good ma is shore in heaven."

Her kind words sent a fresh burst of grief to my heart, and rushing from that awful scene of death, I came up here to my room in the hope, that pouring out to you my grief, would ease to some extent my troubled soul.

Ah! how little did I think yesterday while penning those few lines to you of my great joy over the anticipation of a happy life with one I loved so well, that this awful stroke of sorrow should so soon fall on me. And how little, still, did I realize the deceitfulness of my depraved human heart. Truly "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," and I've been weighed in the

balance and found wanting. How often I have made my boast that Jesus was more than life to me! But I find that in giving up my dear mama I cannot say, "Thy will be done," for oh, there is such a hungering in my heart to have her back again. Worst still, perhaps, when I think of the great sacrifice which her death requires of me—giving up all my plans for the future, and trusting alone in God to mete them out to me day by day, and make me happy in my loss of Harry and mama, I feel a shrinking of soul that justly merits the frown of an offended God. Oh, this horrid, ugly *something*—depravity I know, that wants to have its way and assert itself! This awful something in my heart which must be purged away in Jesus' blood! Oh, what shall I do? My heart is bleeding at every pore. Can this be the crucifixion of self that my precious mama has so often spoken to me of? No; for she said that I must be crucified with Christ to the world; and He *consented* to His crucifixion, and I do not to mine. But if I should, would it not result in a death indeed to self, and

the resurrection of a life "hid with Christ in God?" Surely I ought to consent, for Jesus consented to His death for me. O gracious God! help me I justly ought—indeed I must—I *will*—I *do consent*. Yea Lord, I do indeed consent, and right now with the deepest reverence I dedicate my all—my very life, and what God in His wisdom may choose to make of it. Yes, I do solemnly make this covenant with Him this day; and it is to be an everlasting covenant. Oh, such a restful calm is settling upon my soul. It is the Holy Ghost—that white-winged messenger of peace, to witness the work that Christ through His death has done for me. He is my altar on which I've placed myself—my all; and "whatsoever toucheth the altar *shall be holy*." Glory to Jesus! I believe it.

Your bereaved and afflicted little girl,  
though washed in the precious blood,

THEODORA.

## CHAPTER II.

Browse Hill, May 11th.

Dear Auntie: It has been just one month today, since dear mama left this world for a better one; and just two weeks since Harry Holcomb left us to make his home in another and far distant state.

Yes, I have looked upon his face for perhaps the last time in my life; and while I love him just as well—nay—with a purer love than ever, yet I can lay my hand upon my heart and say, “Thy will be done.” I’ve been hurried through some sad and changing scenes of late, yet O my God, how I thank Thee for the baptism of love which I received as I passed through the furnace! How it soothes my sorrow and calms my soul! If Harry only had this blessed experience of perfect love. If he had only submitted patiently to his fate and consecrated himself to God and to a life of usefulness for Him, how differently would he now feel. Instead of seeking to forget what he calls his misfortune, amidst different scenes and dif-

ferent people, he would now be rejoicing in God his Savior, and doing heartily for Him, whatsoever his hands found to do, and that with all his might. But he would not consent to stay one day longer than he could make his arrangements to leave. He has sold his beautiful little home and farm for a mere trifle in comparison to its real worth, and gone, he says, where he will not always be reminded of the greatest disappointment that he has ever been called upon in his life to bear. Dear, dear Harry! How my heart yearns for your welfare. My prayers shall go with you, and I trust, be a safeguard for you in every danger, trial and temptation; and at last bring you to realize, that the Rock of Ages is the safest refuge for your troubled and tried soul.

I find the home duties which I have chosen for my blessed Master's sake, a sweet labor of love. I joy in ministering to dear papa's comforts, and try to do it as much like my precious mama would as I can. And I know that God is helping me; for only yesterday evening, as twilight was gathering in the room, and

while I was rocking and singing our little babe to sleep, I was all at once reminded of a request that father made of mama once. He said, "My dear, I wish you would always have the house lighted up before dark. It makes home seem more cheery and bright as I come in from my work." Mama always did it, after that, and now my heavenly Father is so kindly reminding me of the duties which she will never again perform for those she loved. I arose at once, and after lighting the lamps, I began to sweep the floor and put things in order ere papa came home. He walked in as I was arranging in a vase some honeysuckles that little Van had gathered in the woods that day and brought home. He stood and looked at me until tears gathered in his eyes; then clasping me in his arms he exclaimed: "My own little daughter! My darling's mantle has fallen upon you."

Yes, these home duties are very sweet; and there are a great many more besides those of ministering to papa's comforts, for the children also justly claim a large share of my attention. The little babe,

whom we have named Clair, is a source of enjoyment to us all. Aunt Rachie gives us much assistance and timely counsel—in fact she has almost the sole care of him. She spends hours in washing and dressing him, and preparing his milk; talking the while in baby lingo to the delight and amusement of the children.

Brother John and Richard have returned to college, and I continue to teach little Van and May-Bell as I did before mama's death. With all these duties, I find my time pretty well filled up. Indeed I am kept so busy, that I can only fill mama's place at home and yet I feel that I would love so much to follow her lowly walk among the poor, the sin-smitten and distressed. But then, I have given my all—my every talent to God. Let Him use me as He wills.

May 20th: I have not been able to finish my letter until today as my duties have been so numerous. As I try to comply with your request and tell of all the principal details of our homelife and general affairs, it takes much of my time. Yesterday morning as I was hearing little

May-Bell recite her lesson, Aunt Rachie gave me the baby until she could see to something very pressing in the kitchen. May-Bell went on with her reading, but very soon I could not hear one word she was saying; for the baby began to fret and then to cry. Van came with his geography about that time. "Do Sister," he said, "find the Bay of Biscay for me." This confusion and pressing demand on my time and patience, was very trying to me, and yet, Oh, how can I ever describe this new experience of grace? Deep down in my soul the mighty power of love held sway, and had not the slightest inclination to yield to the outside foes—the powers of darkness. Papa came in about this time, and observing the confusion, said I was taking on myself more than I was able to do.

"You are right," said Aunt Rachie, who had returned to take the baby. "She is wearing herself out and these children ought to be sent to school."

"Yes," replied papa, "I am glad you mentioned it. I will start them in at the academy at once."



"No, do not," I cried, "for mama would never have done so, I know."

"Your mother would not have objected to them going to the new principal of the school, Professor Pitts. All the patrons who are capable of judging, say that he is a most excellent Christian gentleman, and has an eye to his pupil's moral and Christian as well as literary education."

I ventured no other remonstrance then, for I saw that he was right. Indeed I now realize, that only one day's relief from the care of them has refreshed me wonderfully. And then today, when looking over the family wardrobe, I saw that there was at least a month's work for me, in making new clothes and repairing old ones. And so I am to have more leisure, and can learn to imitate dear mama's example in other walks than those at home. Ah, my blessed Jesus! How lovingly He leads me—granting my every desire. But does He not say in His word, "Delight thyself in the Lord and He will give thee the desires of thy heart?" Truly He is making the rough places smooth, and the narrow pathway which my trembling feet

a short time since began to tread, is broadening as I go forward and gradually becoming, as a sweet writer once expressed it, "radiant with the glory of Him that shines upon it."

I gathered up the little garments which I had selected from a drawer to mend, and seating myself at an open window, began my work. A faint sweet odor from a violet bed under the window, drew my attention to the scene without. It was a lovely May morning; and although a few moments before, there had been a gentle shower of rain, now the sun was shining in all its brilliancy, and a myriad of diamond-hued raindrops sparkled on leaf and flowers. Even the wheat fields beyond the little flower garden upon which my window opened, waved back a brilliant hue from sun and shower. Beyond the wheat fields in the far distance could be seen, green bay, dogwood and scarlet maple, waving their glittering branches in the morning sun; while here and there a tall pine reared its lofty head far above all.

As I sat and gazed upon this scene of

loveliness, my ear was attracted by the soft music of the wind and the chiming of birds, which made a concert in praise to nature's God. Joining in with all my powers I sang:

"Praise God from whom all blessings  
    flow,  
Praise Him all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

## CHAPTER III.

Browse Hill, May 20th.

Dear Auntie: I have had some heavy crosses and sore trials to bear since I wrote you last; but now do not imagine that I am not as happy as ever, for I am willing—yes, glad to suffer and endure with Jesus. These lines of a sweet old hymn, comes fresh to my mind while I write:

“Soul, then know thy full salvation,  
Rise o’er sin, and fear, and care.  
Joy, to find in every station,  
Something still to do or bear.”

But as I write, I am reminded of the fact, that I have been showing to you, only the bright side of my poor little life, when there is a dark side also. This dark side is made up of my trials, temptations, mistakes and blunderings, in trying to do the will of Jesus, my kind, patient and never-failing friend and teacher. Oh! when I think of His patient and tender care over me; and then of my weakness and ignorance, I exclaim: “What is

man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?" But this dark picture, I will not suffer myself to look at often, lest I become discouraged. Indeed I only look at it, at all, in order that I may remember my weakness and that He said, "Without me, ye can do nothing." Satan, however, never wearies in holding it up before me, to attract my gaze from the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

But I started out to tell you something *about* these trials, and so I will proceed. Several days ago, papa gave me some money to purchase what was needed in the line of summer clothing, household linen, etc. Thinking that I could be better suited in the city than in our little town, I took the early morning train, and arrived there about half past ten o'clock. I was very busy all day, hurrying from one store to another, in order to finish my shopping in time to return on the three o'clock train in the afternoon. Half past two found me in the ladies' sitting room at the depot, with a few minutes in which to rest, before my train was due.

As I sat reflecting upon the little details of the day, I remembered how carefully I tried to glorify God in each one; for I realize now, more than ever before, that we can honor Him in small as well as great things. For instance: in selecting May-Bell's dresses, and clothing for little Van, together with table linen, towels, etc. While getting something durable and good, be willing to give a good price, and "use not many words in buying and selling," as Mr. Wesley has so wisely taught us. And then not to forget as I passed down the street to smile pleasantly to the little lame girl that stood on her crutch at the crossing selling her wares. "Poor little unfortunate," I reflected, "motherless, perhaps, and friendless." I purchased one of her toys for our baby and paid her twice its value and moved on. I was aroused from these reflections by the arrival of my train; and purchasing my ticket, I was soon seated in a coach, where I found I was the sole occupant, except the conductor.

I was growing hungry to see my little

group at home now, and while the distance was short, it seemed long to me. I began wearily to inspect the furnishing of the beautiful coach, whose luxury was benefiting no one this afternoon but myself and the lonely conductor who sat opposite me, reading a paper. Tiring of this also and being almost suffocated with the heat, I raised the window at my seat; and as I did so, I saw a wall pocket that was attached to the coach, which held a small Testament. This I took down and began to read. I read of Jesus as He taught the multitude as they pressed upon Him; and how, from sheer exhaustion He retired to a quiet spot for rest and solitude. Then I thought, "how great is the demand for workers. The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Am I engaging all my powers for Christ? Am I doing all that I could for Him?"

As I reflected, the thought arose in my mind, that perhaps the man in front of me was in need of help; and that I might point him to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

"But he is a stranger, and what would he think and how would it look?" were the thoughts that flashed through my mind in rapid succession. Fearing that I might grieve the Holy Spirit by quenching a good impulse, I resolved to do my duty at once, and dismiss the subject from my mind. Raising my eyes, I beheld those of the conductor looking me full in the face. I know I must have been somewhat bewildered, from the dread that I might grieve the Spirit with a man-fearing spirit, for I suddenly beckoned the conductor toward me by a wave of the hand.

"I know he thinks I'm crazy," I thought, as he came and stood in front of me with a quizzical look in his eyes.

"Did you speak to me Miss?" he enquired.

My voice trembled with agitation as I replied, "Sir, I wanted to know if you loved God, the Savior of the world, of whom I've been reading in this blessed book?"

"Of course I do," he answered, "every body loves Him, do they not?" But in-



stantly his expression changed until, a cloud of gloom settled upon his brow, and he added, "Yet sometimes I think, were I to die in my present condition, that I would sink down into an everlasting hell. My life is indeed, an ungodly one, I can assure you."

"Ah! I thought you said that you loved God?" I ventured.

"I suppose I do." he returned.

"O no! no indeed you do not," I said, "for in His word HeH plainly says, 'If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.' "

At this instant the train whistled at my station; and handing the conductor my ticket, I arose and left the coach. As I passed out, I noticed that the seat behind the one I had vacated, was occupied by a lady who had entered unobserved by myself; for I had not discovered her presence until then.

For several days the conversation which I had had with the conductor on the train, kept returning to my mind with a tendency to depress it. With an intuition of some sort which I cannot de-

scribe, I felt that I had made a mistake somewhere, and yet I could not tell what it was.

Remembering a widow, Mrs. Comer, who was an old and dear friend of mama's, I resolved to go to see her, thinking that she might refresh as well as enlighten my mind, and help me to solve the difficulty. It was on Sunday afternoon that I put on my hat and started in the direction of her house.

Ahead of me, as I passed down the street, I saw a crowd of men and boys playing marbles in front of a grocery and fruit stand. In the crowd, alas, was the Secretary of our Sunday school engaged in this idle sport on the Lord's day. How thankful and yet humbled I was, when they looked up and seeing my approach, that they dropped their heads, ceased the game and walked away. Why was I thankful and yet humbled at this? Because God has so exalted me—even me—a poor, weak, blundering girl; that I could say with Job, that great and good patriarch of old, "The young men saw me and hid themselves; the aged arose and stood up."

As I knocked at the door of Mrs. Comer's little cottage, it was answered in the person of that kind, good woman herself, who welcomed me with a loving, motherly caress.

The last time I had visited at her house, was in company with my precious mama who had loved her so much. Now as the remembrance of that visit arose so fresh in my mind, I sank on the stool at her feet, and burying my face in her lap, I cried and sobbed aloud. Oh! how kind she was; and under the soft, gentle touches of her hand on my head, and her sweet words of consolation, I was soothed and calmed; and drying my eyes, and seating myself in a chair by her side, I said; "Dear Mrs. Comer, please bear with me a little, and let me tell you some of my trials. You know I made an open profession of sanctification some weeks ago; but now I am sorely tempted by the evil one to think I made a mistake in taking such a step, as I am so weak and erring. I know that this is merely a temptation, for I would not for the world disclaim the gracious work that God has

wrought in my soul; and while I am not weary in well doing, yet, Oh! somehow I am weary in body and in mind. Please lend a helping hand to a weary pilgrim, and God will bless you."

This priceless woman knew exactly how to do this. She did not attempt to comfort me with mere words; she knew there was something better. "I understand your case," she smilingly said, and taking her Testament she began to read. Her soft, sweet voice mingled correspondingly with the precious words of consolation she was reading; and I repeated them in my heart as she went on, "Yes, troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed, yet not in despair." "Mrs. Comer," I said, "there is indeed a balm in Gilead and I am greatly helped; for those words tell my experience exactly. But tell me please what you think of a little matter that weighs on my mind." I told her then of the cross I had taken up in speaking to the conductor on the train, and how I had suffered and felt depressed on account of it, and then asked her to tell me wherein I had erred.

"I don't know that you have erred at all," she said. I think you acted nobly and wisely in improving that opportunity to sow a few seed for the Master. Some day you may reap the fruits of your labor. I said that you had not erred at all; but probably it would have been wiser to have waited until the conductor came for your ticket, instead of beckoning to him with your hand. This gave him room to think a little strangely, as the act was somewhat unseemly. However," she said smiling indulgently, "this was only a trifle in comparison with the good your words may yet accomplish. We are liable to make a mistake, and you must not suffer them to worry your mind. Do the best you can each day, trusting God to take care of the consequences. He will surely do this and overrule all your mistakes for good.

"If little Clair was beginning to walk, and while taking his first steps he should stumble and fall, don't you think he would be more careful the next effort he made? And would you forsake him and not encourage him to try again? Indeed

you would not; but you would comfort and caress him, and lead him more tenderly than ever. And so God deals with His children, using our blunders as lessons to improve us, while loving and pitying us more tenderly than a mother.

"But come," she continued changing the subject, "let me show you my flowers since I have taken them out of the hothouse and arranged them so prettily on the borders of the walk where the sun can get to them, they have grown and flourished beautifully. Take down the garden scissors in the hall, while I get my sunbonnet, and I will cut you a bouquet."

I handed her the scissors and we passed into the front yard where I saw every variety of hothouse plants, from the tall abutilon, and scarlet pink, and white fish geraniums, down to the tiniest rose and nutmeg, blooming and filling the atmosphere with fragrance.

"Had you heard that Mary Saunders was quite sick?" said Mrs. Comer clipping a white rose bud, and arranging it among the hothouse flowers she held in

her hand. "I missed her from my class at Sabbath school last Sunday, and called yesterday to know the cause of her absence and found her in bed. Stop in to see her as you go home if you can. She loves you dearly, and a visit from you might do her much good."

"Yes, I will," I replied, "and if you won't think me ungrateful, I will take these lovely flowers to her."

"Do as you wish with them dear, they are yours." she said, kissing me goodby.

I left her standing at the gate; and as I walked down the avenue in front of the house so beautifully shaded with evergreen, I remembered how often I had played there when I was a child. I have known Mrs. Comer since I can remember and have been taught to revere and love her; and I am so glad I have, for what an invaluable friend she will be to me now, that my dear mother is taken from me.

As I drew near the home of Mary Saunders, my heart breathed a prayer to God that I might be very guarded in all I said or did; for I knew I was about

to go among those who did not believe in nor understand the doctrine of holiness which I profess.

Mary Saunders is a girl I dearly love. She is a true Christian, yet being in a home whose inmates are not at all congenial with her along these lines, she has a great deal to combat with. I found her very ill indeed and flushed with fever; and as I laid the flowers I had brought her, on the pillow against her hot cheek, I saw tears filling her eyes.

"Thank you very much," she said, "how kind you are to bring them! Oh! Theo, I have longed to see you since I've been so sick, and I am so glad you have come at last. The doctor says I mustn't talk much, but dear you can read to me. Get my little Testament yonder on the table. Read me something real comforting; and while you read, I will close my eyes and listen.

I have felt too weak and listless since my illness to keep up my devotion, but now I'll have you do that for me please.

I was about to comply with her wishes, when Mrs. Saunders arose and suddenly



left the room. As she passed into the hall, she turned and beckoned me to follow her and I did. When we were both in the hall and the door closed she said, "Miss Arlington, I would prefer that you would not read the Bible and hold prayer with my daughter. The doctor says that she must be kept very quiet, and of course such proceedings would excite her exceedingly."

"Dear Mrs. Sanders, I plead, God's blessed word never excites the Christian, but soothes and comforts as nothing else can. Do let me pray at least with dear Mary before I go."

"I'm not to be persuaded," she replied coolly, looking toward the front door as though she would have me walk out at it. I did so, but not until I had seen poor Mary, and explained to her why I could not grant her request. Gathering up my hat and gloves from the dresser where I had left them, I kissed her hot cheeks and whispered, "Look on the bright side, dear little friend, and remember that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." I met Mrs. Sanders at the front

door. "Come and see Mary when she recovers," she said blandly.

I thanked her and passed out. Oh, how glad I am that I had a good mother, Auntie. Mrs. Sanders is a member of the church; yet she knows nothing of spiritual, heartfelt religion. Mary was converted last summer, and there has been a remarkable change in her since. Mrs. Sanders recognizes this herself, and says she is glad to see it, but does not believe in sanctification—and that we can "Never be perfect creatures in this sinful world." Ah! No indeed! She is quite right in that; but O thank God! we can be pure in heart and perfect in love and this is sanctification.

Dear Auntie, good bye and pray often for your own little girl,

THEODORA.

## CHAPTER IV.

Browse Hill, June 7, 18—

My dear Aunt: When I reached home that Sabbath afternoon, about which I wrote you in my last letter, I found all the family on the front veranda, enjoying the cool of the day. The sun was just sinking in the west, and as I approached the house, I saw father sitting in his large armchair with May-Bell and Van on either side of him. That he was interesting them exceedingly, I could tell by their repeated exclamations of joy; and when I drew nearer, I saw that he was showing and explaining to them, the pictures in our large family Bible.

Aunt Rachie was sitting at the far end of the veranda with little Clair on her lap, and as she sung in low tones an old cradle song, her turbaned head kept time to the soothing lullaby.

As I ascended the steps, papa told Van to bring me a chair, and May-Bell to take my hat as I seemed, he said, wearied.

"No," I said, "I want to enjoy the pic-

tures with you. Proceed papa, and don't suffer my coming to interrupt you."

He turned another leaf, and lo! instead of a beautiful picture, there was the tear-stained record of my mother's death. There was no joyful exclamation now; indeed it seemed as though a bomb shell had fallen into our midst, and taken one away. Even Aunt Rachie noticing the solemn stillness, ceased her song and bowed her head upon her breast. Papa at last broke the silence. "My precious children," he said, wiping his eyes, "I will explain this picture also, for it, too, contains a lesson. It is to teach us that this life, however happy, can not last forever, and that its joys and sorrows are wisely mixed and mingled together. If it were not so, we might soon forget God and cease to long for His coming. Dear children, you have a mother and a Savior in heaven. Let us meet them there."

The ringing of the church bells for evening service drew our attention, and Aunt Rachie arose, and laying the baby in his little crib, withdrew to the dining-

room to prepare our evening meal. It consisted of buttered slices of light bread and glasses of milk, which she brought out on a waiter and handed around as was our custom on summer evenings, especially on the Lord's day.

As we walked to church that night, papa spoke of the Sunday school of which he is the Superintendent. He said he was so glad to see an increase in the membership, and unfolded several plans to me by which he hoped to increase its spiritual interest also. Oh! what a comfort Auntie, when I think, that, while I am motherless, yet I have a good father, one that I can, and do honor.

June the 8th: I had just written the above, when I had a visitor, and so was obliged to postpone finishing my letter until to-day. But that was all right—and I will now give you an account of that visit. But before I tell you that, let me first tell you something of the visitor.

A very poor widow died here about a month ago, leaving five little children to the care of a married daughter with an infant of her own.

Remembering that pure and undefiled religion is to visit such as these in their affliction, I called at once to see them.

How can I ever picture to you, dear Auntie, the wretchedness of that home? Lucy Perryman, the married daughter in whose care the orphan children were left, can not be much more than sixteen years old herself. She was sitting on a goods box in the center of the room, with a dirty crying infant on her lap. She was very slovenly dressed; and around her on the floor played the children of the household, who were not only ragged, but extremely dirty. The floor was soiled and badly littered, and as I seated myself beside her, I took the baby on my lap and asked her its name.

"Rosie-Sofair," she said smiling upon it as though she thought its name suited it exactly. I thought to the contrary, as a disagreeable odor arose from it to my nostrils. Handing the baby back to her I said, "Lucy, I want to help you in your great affliction, and comfort you all I can. I think I can understand how you feel; for I, too, have lost a mother

and know how to sympathize with motherless girls."

Tears sprang to her eyes and she thanked me warmly.

After that she became very communicative and opened her heart to me in a simple childlike way on all points without reserve. I was surprised when I learned that her husband made \$2.00 a day at the public works; and more so when I compared this fact with their poverty-stricken appearance. But from further observation, I found that it was a lack of industry and good management at home, that rendered them so comfortless and bare. I saw, that, were this matter remedied, more good would result than to lay millions at their feet. I felt that I would love to aid her, in a sisterly way, to overcome these obstacles, but realizing that I must unite tact with prayer to do any thing successful in the matter, I put the subject from my mind for that time.

My heart yearned over the unfortunate little household and I longed to pour out my heart in prayer for them to the God

of orphans, which I did with Lucy's permission and then bade them good bye.

I think this visit did much to gain their affection for me; for every day after that, poor Lucy would come to see me, with her dirty little infant on her arm, and the five ragged, motherless little ones, following behind.

This hindered me, each day, considerably about my work, and I could see that she was neglecting her's. It went on, however, until the morning I wrote you that I would not be able at that time to finish my letter, on account of a visitor, and that personage was Lucy Perryman. I started to tell you about that visit, but as I've taken up so much space in introducing to you her real character and ways, I will wait and give you an account of her visit in my next letter. Humbly yours,

THEODORA.



## CHAPTER V.

Browse Hill, June 13, 18—.

Dear Auntie: As I entered the room that morning, I found Lucy as pleasant and well satisfied as ever, to be in rags and filth, and let the children remain in the same condition. They were all there again, from Rosie-Sofair, up to the oldest of the poor little orphans.

I was puzzled what to do, but finally said, "Lucy, we will take a walk in the garden if you like. I want to have a little private talk with you. We can leave the children with Aunt Rachie until we return. Shall we not?"

As we passed down the garden walk and seated ourselves on a rustic bench, I said, "Lucy, dear, if a person should see certain faults in you, and turn a cold shoulder to you on account of them, and not speak to you, but to others about it, to your damage, would you think that person as good a friend to you as one who would frankly tell you of these faults, and help you overcome them?"

"Of course not," she answered.

"Suppose then, that you and I agree to be that kind of friend to each other, that is, help each other in this way. I think we need a friend like that—in fact, I know every one does for you know we all have our faults."

"Agree," said she, nodding her head like a child.

"Well, you begin first and tell me of mine," I said smiling.

"Oh! "she exclaimed," I don't see any fault in you at all. I think you are the best and kindest young lady in the world, and I love you dearly."

How crestfallen I felt! And now what a cross to tell her of those I knew she possessed. After a moment's reflection, however, I said, "Dear Lucy, if you can not see my faults, it is because you don't know me very well or perhaps behold me with a partial eye. At any rate, you saying that, does not disarm me of my duty to you. My dear friend, I have seen some very grave ones in you, and I want to help you overcome them if I may."

"Of course," she answered. "And tell me what they are, for I want to be exactly like you if I can."

"Well the greatest of them all," I said, and then hesitated—not knowing exactly how to come to the truth, "are your sloven and untidy habits."

Poor Lucy cast her eyes down to her tattered calico dress that lay in loose, dirty folds about her. When she raised them, they were filled with tears.

"Oh!" I thought, with all my intended precaution and tactfulness, I have bungled at last."

"You have hurt my feelings," she cried, "worse than I could have imagined you would."

"Lucy," I said in the kindest tone I could, "if I should undertake to extract a splinter from your hand, it would hurt you, would not it?"

"Of course," she answered.

"Well then, these faults are like that. I am trying to pick them out of your character and it hurts you, nevertheless they ought to come."

"Yes I see—I see," she said, "go on.

But wait and let me tell you first my situation. Well, my husband, is good enough to get me dresses and I have a trunk at home most full of dress patterns that he has brought home for me at different times, but I can't have a sewing machine like other folks and how am I to get anything done with all these children to look after?"

That is rather difficult; but I have a machine and can help you some. You can soon learn though, by arranging your work systematically, to depend upon your own efforts principally. By using good judgment and economy, I think that your husband, with a salary of \$2.00 a day, might soon be able to buy you a sewing machine. Yes, management, Lucy, is the first lesson you will have to learn. And now if you will let me spend the day with you tomorrow, I will try to teach you what little I know in that line. I might be able to give you a few ideas."

"All right," she said in childish triumph, and now we saw the children coming, we returned to the house.

"I will look for you early," she said as she left, "be sure and come."

The next morning after breakfast, I put on my sunbonnet, and taking the little path through the woods, I started in the direction of Lucy's house.

I felt such a joy in my heart, because I was going on a mission for Jesus. Nature's robe on a May morning, had never seemed so bright and beautiful as on this particular day. Indeed the birds seemed to sing sweeter, the air was more balmy, and the little brook which ran at the bottom of the hill, in a few steps of Lucy's house, seemed cooler and clearer than ever, as it gurgled along its pebbly course, as if rejoicing in its freedom.

As I came near the cottage, Ida, the eldest of the orphans, was standing in the door. When she saw me, she seized a broom and began to sweep vigorously. I could not but wonder at the sweet humility and teachableness of these poor obscure people—a virtue so rare, among those who would call themselves their superior. "This is why the common people heard Jesus gladly," I reflected, "they were humble and teachable."

I found in the humble little home, a considerable improvement. The beds looked more tidy, the chairs were arranged more orderly, and the hearth was painted over with a coating of lime. Over the mantelpiece, I noticed that several newspapers had been pasted on the wall which showed that the poor little occupants had tried at least to give the room a more cleanly appearance. And it did look cooler and fresher. I tried to encourage them by exclamations of praise. She remarked that she would have scrubbed the floor also if she'd had time.

"Oh! well." I said, "we can't do all at once, but what you do, try always to do well. Also let it be an *every day* business.

She now took from a trunk several dress patterns of calico and gingham, saying, "Among the lessons you teach me to-day, please let one be, to cut and fit this cloth into dresses for me and the children. I am determined, hereafter, to keep my person nice as well as my house, but there is so much to do, that I hardly know where to begin."

"With prayer," I suggested, "and if

you will continue each morning to gather these children around you and read a portion of the scriptures to them asking God to help you control and manage them and your domestic duties through the day, with wisdom and good judgment, you will find it a great help in keeping and preforming these new resolutions. You can't do it in your own strength, Lucy. Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing."

I read some in her little Testament and we had prayer, after which we went to work in earnest.

I will not go through with all the details of the day; but I tried to help and show her as far as I knew myself, how to keep house and do her work to the best advantage.

Very soon I had one of the children bringing in wood for the stove, another bringing water from the spring, and another caring for the baby; while Lucy, herself, cut and basted a lining to a coat which I had just fitted. We worked on till near the hour for dinner, and then Lucy and Ida withdrew to the kitchen.

"May I come in, too?" I said peeping in at the half-open door.

"Come in, of course," said Lucy. And I soon made myself busy helping to prepare 'dinner.

I thought I would make it my business to arrange everything nicely on the table, and finding that the knives and forks needed scrubbing, I called one of the children, and showed him the process, which he caught on to, very readily.

"Lucy," said I, "this morning as I looked through the windows into your garden, I saw some nice lettuce and onions growing. Suppose I go out and gather some for dinner. They would be so nice with the gravy of that ham you are frying, served with them."

"I will go myself, but let me first give you a cloth for the table."

While she was gone, I swept the floor, and spread the clean white cloth that she had brought me, and arranged the dishes on the table.

Little Johnnie now brought the knives and forks, which he declared were so bright that he could see his face in them.



"Johnnie," I said, "watch me set the table, and tomorrow your sister will let you do it. If it is done well, then perhaps she will let you do it every day."

"I wish you would live with us all the time," he said, looking up shyly into my face.

I told him to run wash his face nicely for dinner, and comb his hair and I would give him a kiss.

When Lucy brought the lettuce and onions, I helped her dress them for the table. The whistle then blew at the public works for 12 o'clock, and in a short time after, a tall, gawky, beardless boy about nineteen years of age, entered the kitchen of the little cottage, and asked if dinner was ready. Observing me a stranger, he looked down at his soiled shirt and said aside to Lucy, "Who's that?"

"That is Miss Theodora Arlington, Will. She has come over to stay and show me something about housekeeping, and cutting and fitting some clothes for me and the children. And this is Will Perryman, my husband, Miss Theodora."

I could not help noticing the gratified expression on the poor boy's face at this piece of information, and also the delight with which his quick eye took in the cozy and inviting appearance of the kitchen.

"Lucy," I said, when dinner was over and we had returned to our work, "did you notice how pleased your husband seemed at the general improvement of things? You are a wife, and have a better right than I to know what would make your home bright and attractive to your husband; but it seems to me, that a cleanly and tidy house has a great deal to do with it. Keep it up a month, and see if you will want then to discard the habit because it has no power to make home pleasant.

As the evening shades began to gather, I collected a few unfinished garments which I had promised Lucy I would stitch on my machine, and bidding them each good bye, I left amid repeated invitations to come again.

When I arrived at home, I told papa my experience of the day. I longed to

hear him say whether I had acted wisely and well.

He satisfied all my doubts by saying, "I'm glad, daughter, that you had the courage of your convictions and acted on it. It is well that you dealt plainly and firmly with the poor unfortunate girl—correcting those glaring faults that are so detrimental to home morals, as well as home comforts."

I will close for this time, dear Auntie, as I don't want to weary you with too long a letter.

Your loving niece,  
THEODORA.

## CHAPTER VI.

Browse Hill, June 18, 18--.

Dear Auntie: Since I wrote you last God has so graciously given me a help-mate, or colaborer, in the person of sweet Mary Sanders. But let me begin at the first and tell you all about it.

The very next morning after my visit to Lucy, I was sitting in my room rocking and singing little 'Clair to sleep, when I heard a knock at the door; and in answering to my "Come in," Mary Sanders entered, looking so pale and thin!

I sprang to meet her, as I had not seen her since her illness. "Take this chair," I said, "You seem so weak and tired."

"Yes," she replied, "I'm not very strong as yet, but I'm improving every day. God has let me get well; but Oh! dear, I'm having a lot of trouble. May I tell you about it, and get your help?"

"With all my heart you shall have it. Speak out at once and tell me what troubles you," I answered.

"I don't know exactly where to begin," she said, "but since my conversion last summer, I've had a great longing and hungering for a more personal, and deeper union with God. I notice your sweet sanctified life, and am convinced that this experience is what my soul yearns for. While I was so sick, I promised the Lord that if He would raise me up, I would never rest until I obtained it. One morning after I had made this vow, I was lying on my bed silently praying that God would make my way plain before me, and remove every obstacle that might hinder me from coming to this sweet haven of perfect love, when I heard voices in the parlor which opened into my room. My door was half ajar, and I recognized the voice of Mrs. Jennings, who had come up from the city to spend the summer with a friend of mama's, Mrs. Williams. She was talking in a low undertone to mama, and I could only catch a word or two now and then. "Such fanaticism!" I heard her say, "'Tis perfectly unbearable. Keep company with a daughter of mine? No in-

deed!—blind leading the blind—Insane asylum will be the next thing, and you will see it just as I tell you—mark my word.” And then followed a long preamble in a still lower tone, of which I only caught a word occasionally. I heard your name, and then ‘railroad coach,’ and ‘conductor,’ and then raising her voice a little louder, she exclaimed, ‘Indeed it is true, for I was an eye witness to it myself, and heard every word of the conversation.’

“At last, to my great satisfaction she left and mama came at once to my room and related the whole thing about you talking to the man on the train, and said that your name was in everybody’s mouth, and that everybody was afraid of you because you talked so much religion, and said such hard things to them about their faults; and that you were very unpopular. She also said that people thought you would eventually lose your mind, and that she hoped I would not take on to any of your ways. O, Theodora! how weak we are by nature! I see now so plainly that I was too cowardly to keep the vows I

had made God that I would not rest until I too, obtained that salvation which renders the Lord's, a peculiar people. I was in this distress of mind when you came that afternoon, and mama would not let you pray with me. Theo, my mother is a good woman as far as any one can be good without divine grace—indeed, she has some rare and noble qualities; but as you are aware, she is unconverted, and consequently blind to spiritual things. To lead the life that you live would be for me to incur her displeasure, and I know that she would prove to be, as scripture terms it, a foe of my own household. I love my mother and I want to please her, and oh, what a cross to take a step that would not give her pleasure.”

“My Dear Mary,” I said, when she had finished speaking, “I do indeed sympathize with you, but I think that a great deal of your trouble is borrowed, and therefore unnecessary. However, don't fret about the consequences of doing right. God will surely make the rough places smooth, I know from my own experience. But you must be willing, dear, to suffer

all things for Christ's sake, or you cannot win the prize. Herein is your consecration. We will meet with opposition, but in all these things we are more than conqueror through Him that loves us. Oh, Mary, cross over Jordan and enter into the Beulah land. The pomegranates and figs are fine, and the grapes of Eshcol, so sweet. Besides, the white banner of holiness is trembling in the hands of but few. Help us to hold it up that it may wave for Jesus."

"I believe I would if I knew how," she said wearily, "for I am tired wandering in the wilderness, and my soul longs for rest."

"Then delay no longer, but let us kneel right here, and while we are on our knees, make a full consecration to God. And remember the covenant is to be an *everlasting* covenant. If you will only come thus, be sure He will cleanse you every whit."

We knelt, and she prayed. Oh! I will never forget that prayer. How it moves my heart to think of it yet! How humble, how lowly, how piteously beseeching



that God would not send her away empty. When it was finished she still remained on her knees.

"Mary," I said, "do you want me to pray for you?"

"Whenever you will," she answered wearily.

"But do you want me to pray for you now?"

"Oh! I want to *know*," she said, "whether God sanctifies me *now*. I cannot go away until I do."

"He says, what touches the altar shall be holy. You are all on the altar, are you not?"

"Yes, but how am I to *know* that He sanctifies me *now*?"

"*Believe* it," I answered emphatically.

"*Believe* it," she repeated, rising instantly from her knees. "Believe it? Of course I will, and do, with all my heart. How natural and right that I should, since our God cannot lie. O child!" she continued, taking my hand and pressing it to her lips, "how glad I am that I ever knew and loved you! You do me good—indeed you do. May God ever bless you that you may live to bless others."

"I am glad the Lord has used me to help you," I said, and as she arose to go I added: "Don't be afraid to use your influence for Jesus at home, or in public; and confess before the world what He has done for you this morning. And when temptations assail you,—for Satan will visit you as usual—yes, oftener than ever—just keep your eye on Jesus, for 'He that keepeth Israel, neither slumbers nor sleeps'."

"I have no fear," she answered calmly. "Let temptation come, however strong, I can but continue to believe. Yes, believe. O blessed faith! How simple it is, and yet how mysterious to some."

She left, and I went straight to my place of prayer, and falling on my knees, I thanked God for what He had done for us; praying that we might be co-laborers in His vineyard, and useful in bringing many souls into the experience of a living faith which "sweetly works by love and purifies the heart." O auntie, if every Christian had this blessed experience, how happy they would be, and oh! what a church we would have—so united and

strong! Then, indeed, it would be a  
mighty stronghold against the power of  
the evil one. As ever,

Your loving niece,

THEODORA.

## CHAPTER VII.

Browse Hill, June 25, 18—.

Dear Auntie: A few days ago, I was sitting one evening in the back gallery peeling some peaches to serve with sugar and cream for supper, when Aunt Rachie came to me with an empty bucket in her hand. "Look here child," said she, "what you want me to do 'bout that Perryman woman? She's been sendin' and sendin' here to borrow, and says no more about payin' back, than ef she never thought o' borrowin'. Now she wants some meal again, and I do believe I can say and not tell a false, that it makes a half dozen times that she's sent and never yet paid back a single dust. Now I believe in lendin'—the Bible says lend, but what you gwine do when things go on this way? It 'pears like to me, your pa can't stand it. It'll sure break any man in the world that works like him for his living."

I told her that I would fix that all right, and to fill the bucket with meal for

me while I got my hat, and I would take it to Lucy myself.

I had not gone many steps from the house, when May Bell and Van, who had just returned from school, came running after me and wanted to know if they might go too. I said, yes, and they came bounding down the hill crying: "Wait, we've got something to tell you."

I waited until they came up with me, and I heard Van say, aside to May Bell, "You tell her sister, I can't."

"What is it dear," I asked, taking her hand in mine as we walked along together.

"Well," she replied—her voice trembling a little with agitation, "brother and I—you know—we've made up our minds to join the church next Sunday, if papa doesn't care, and we want you to ask him for us."

"We've been having prayer meetings at school when recess came," said Van, in a timid voice, which grew bolder as he continued, "Bob Vaughn—he did the leading, but we all prayed, and maybe some just took it for a play meeting, but Bell and I

—we were in earnest, and we got religion.”

“Now brother,” said May Bell, “I believe they were all in earnest and I believe they all got religion. I think Mamie Fair did, because she was so kind to her little sister, and Louisa too, for she kissed me this morning at recess—and, did you notice, Buddie, how tender-hearted Fred Williams was today? When Alice Fritz stuck that needle through the butterfly’s wing, he told her that was cruel.”

As I listened to this sweet babble, I laughed with delight, and thought that truly out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, God had perfected praise. I stooped and kissed both of their fresh young faces, saying that I knew father would be as glad as I to hear of their plans, and that I would take the sweet message to him with the greatest pleasure.

We had now arrived at Lucy’s house, and as I entered the front door I saw her sitting near a window at the far end of the room, bending over a book which was resting on her knee. She did not see me as I entered, and I walked softly to the

back of the chair, and looked over her shoulder. I discovered that she was reading the Bible, and a tear fell upon these words: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

"Lucy," I said, laying my hand softly on her shoulder, "What makes you cry?"

She looked up and seeing who it was that spoke to her, began to sob and cry afresh. "I've been badly treated," she said. "Indeed I never have been so badly treated in all my life. Sarah Green, a friend that I thought would stick to me through thick and thin, has insulted me shamefully—and that in her own house. I went there this evening to see if she would loan me a little meal for supper, as I was out, and it is so far to the commissary. She told me in the unkindest way she could, that she had nothing to lend to such as me and away she flirted off to the kitchen, leaving me standing in the door. I came home with a heart ready to burst, and thinking I could get the meal from you, I sent, for I remembered your past kindness, and what a good friend you had

been to me—telling me of my faults instead of insulting me as Sarah has done, when she professed to think the world and all of me too.”

“My dear, here is the meal,” I said. “I have brought it to you myself, and you are welcome to it, but did you know that you owed me a good deal besides this? Now don’t misunderstand me child—don’t think that I am angry with you about it, but I think it’s right to tell you for your own future happiness and welfare with your neighbors. Now perhaps, you owe Sarah Green something, and that is why she is so angry with you.”

“Yes she does,” said Ida, who had come in and had listened intently to what had been said. “I know you owe for that butter you got from her that day we had the chicken stew for dinner, and you sent Johnnie for a mug of molasses last week, and a gallon of milk and I know that you haven’t paid any of it back.”

Lucy’s eyes were no longer wet now, but very wide open as she stared Ida full in the face. “That is just exactly it,” she exclaimed—“that is just it, I know. And



only to think, how forgetful I am. Miss Theodora, will you please excuse me ma'am, and I will get Will to bring home some meal this very night and tomorrow I will pay you every bit I owe. I will also straighten up with Sarah tomorrow without fail."

"I would advise you Lucy," I said, "for your own comfort, never to borrow if you can possibly avoid it. When you do, though, make it a rule to return what you've borrowed, at your very first opportunity. Follow this plan, and it will save you much trouble, and also your neighbor."

She said that she would, and I returned home just as Aunt Richie was arranging supper on the table.

That night when we assembled in father's room, I told him of the children's wishes in regard to joining the church. He was rejoiced at the news as I thought he would be, and talked long and seriously to them of the obligation of a church member. When the hour came for family worship, he read the general rules of the church, explaining them in a simple way,

that made them readily comprehend the meaning. When he prayed, he asked God's especial care to be over them—the lambs of the fold, and that they might really be the light of home, and grow up to be an honor to the church which they were about to join. Dear father! when I kissed him good night I saw tears of pure joy in his dear old eyes.

June 26.—Today at noon when father came home to dinner, he said, as he handed me a letter, the seal of which had been broken. Good news! A letter from John and Richard. They say that school closes on the 30th, and they will soon be at home again."

How glad I was! and went at once to my room where I could read their letters without interruption.

My dear, dear brother! How proud I am of both! Proud, did I say? Dear auntie, would it not be better to say thankful? Yes thankful in my very soul of them in many, many respects. Thankful that they still remember their Creator in the sweet springtime of their youth, and that the good seed which has been

sown in their hearts all through a life of pious training, has taken deep root; and promise to bring forth fruit to the glory of God.

I will copy a short extract from John's. He says: "Father, I have always believed in God. You and dear mama have taught me to, as far back as I can remember; and faith in His word seems a part of my very being, and yet there is one thing that troubles me, and I want you and little sister to pray much for me along that line. I don't enjoy that sweet, perfect union with God, that you say is my privilege, and for which my soul so often craves."

Richard writes less seriously, for he was always a buoyant, bright fun-loving boy. His letter is addressed to me, and toward the close he says, "Well little sister, I am truly glad that my school days will soon be over; and if I consulted my inclinations, I would sow some wild oats the first thing I did after being released from the close restriction of school life. But don't you be uneasy. I'll not follow these inclinations; but settle down to a

quiet farmer's life, I suppose, and get married some day to help the matter. But if I do, I'll be certain to get a wife exactly like dear mother, and then I know, no kind of business could be dull to me."

Poor dear boy! These inclinations how hard—nay, how impossible to fight against them in our own strength I am glad that I received these letters from my brother's, and found out some of the cares that press upon them and make them unhappy. I am glad because I now know better how to pray for them; and and can take their cases right to God, and ask Him to bring them out more than conquerors over them all.

I remember so well when they were but boys, how John's serious turn of mind made him take the petty cares and annoyances of his child life, so hard and bitter—rendering him so unhappy. On the other hand, Richard's thoughtless and care-free disposition, would make him forget even those things which deserved his serious attention. I have heard dear mother say, that she believed, in time,

God would overrule it to their good, and that these prominent features in their dispositions, when sanctified, would prove wonderful instruments for the glory of God.

Well Auntie, I have written you a long letter, but one more incident, and then I will close.

This evening when the children came home from school, I noticed that May-Bell was not so cheerful as usual; and her eyes looked tear-stained as though she had been crying. I asked her was anything the matter, and she answered in broken tones: "Nothing very much; but sister, how many days is it before Sunday? and do you suppose a great many people will be there; and that anybody will laugh at buddie and me and call us crazy for joining the church?"

"Crazy! no indeed. But very sensible and sweet for giving your hearts to God while you are so young. Who said that people would call you crazy?" I enquired.

"Nobody but Philip Jones; he laughed at me to-day, when I told him about it, and said that I was going crazy like you;

and that his Uncle Will's ox-driver had named his old brown steer, *sanctification*. I told him that he ought to have named that pretty, bright spotted one that, and that you were sanctified and was not dull and ugly at all; and that papa said you were the light of our home. Now sister, I know I ought not, but it seems like I just can't help backing out about joining the church Sunday, after Philip laughed at me as he did. What would you do, if you were me?"

"Why I would go right on as though he had said nothing at all and join. Don't you know that the wicked people used to call Jesus all sorts of ugly names? and Jesus tells us in His word, that if if we follow Him, we must expect the same; and that the world will not love us.

Dear little nursling, "I said, folding her in my arms as I thought of her so young and tender—fighting her first battle against temptation and sin. Dear little one! let us kneel and ask God to give us the victory."

We knelt, and when we arose, her face

was bright with childish triumph as she exclaimed: "I've just give it all up, and promised God I'd not go back on my word, and now I felt just like I'd taken a cool drink of water."

Praise God for victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am as ever, your loving niece,

THEODORA.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Browse, Hill, June 28, 18—

Dear Auntie: Yesterday was a blessed day to my soul, for I witnessed a sight that strengthened the inner man. I saw young and tender lambs taken into the bosom of the church to be nourished and fed upon the sincere milk of the word. Oh! pray that it may be given and that without stint.

It was the day dear little Van and May-Bell were to attach themselves to the church, that they arose bright and early; and I got them ready for Sunday school long before I was ready myself. They were anxious to be off, and so I sent them on with father, while I remained a few moments behind to see to some little duties which required my attention, and to remind Aunt Rachie to see well to the baby, and neglect him for nothing.

On my way to the church, I met with a little incident which hindered me somewhat, but for which I was not sorry. I



had to pass Mrs. Williams' home on my way; and as I walked along by the gate, I saw the family sitting on the front veranda, laughing and chatting in company with their visitor from the city, Mrs. Jennings. I remembered what Mary Sanders had told me of her visit to their house, and of Mrs. Jennings opinion of me. But thank God! the recollection of it failed to depress my spirits in the least; for what is the world and the opinions of the world to me now? Yes, they are all under my feet, glory to God!

As I passed along a few yards from the house, I noticed a little stream of water, running through the swampy bottom of an old sedge field. At the head of this stream, there grew a clump of willow trees, whose long graceful branches, drooped until they dipped themselves into the bosom of the little stream. It was here that I thought, as I passed along, I heard the voice of a child sobbing, and crying, and muttering something aloud. I noiselessly drew nearer; and peeping through the green willow boughs, I saw a lad of about twelve sum-

mers, reclining upon the mossy bank of the stream. He was tastily dressed in a suit of blue linen; and the snowy sailor collar fastened so neatly at his throat betokened the careful, and perhaps loving hands of a mother had not forgotten their mission. But in spite of this, there was an expression of sadness in the thin, suffering little face, that haunts me yet. A volume of poems lay upon the grass at his side, and while he lovingly stroked a dead gosling that he held in his hand, I saw tears fall thick and fast on the golden down. He was saying something in low tones to himself, and as I strained my ears to listen, I caught these words:

“My poor little pet, I wanted you *so*, but you died like most everything else I love.”

I crossed over the low fence that separated us, and going up to where he was, I said: “My dear little fellow, I heard you crying as I passed along, and thought I would stop and comfort you if I could. What is your name?”

“My name is Leonard Jennnings, and I thank you for your kindness, but you can

not help my trouble; and if you could, when you went away, it would come again. You may think me very foolish, Miss, to cry about a poor little dead gosling; but it was company to me, and loved me so much! I found the egg from which it was hatched, in the woods, and set it under a hen. It had learned to know my voice and follow me all over the yard, and would eat from my hand; and now it is dead, and I will miss it so! This is not all. I loved a horse that father had last spring and used to ride it to the pastures, and to water every day; and it would whicker and neigh for me when it got hungry, and one day father came home and said that he had sold her which nearly broke my heart. I had a noble dog that loved me and followed me everywhere I went and it died."

Here a fresh burst of sobs shook his little frame, and laying the dead gosling in the grave which he had dug for it in the sand, he covered it up, and was about to walk away, when I laid my hand on his shoulder and said: "Leonard, my dear little boy, come and go with me to

the Sunday school. There you can learn to love a Friend that will never die. I mean Jesus, who loves little children, and who died for them, but rose again and is now in heaven praying for them. Will you come?"

He hesitated a moment, while he looked long and searchingly into my face. "I will go," he said at last, "if you will be my teacher. What is your name?"

I told him, but suggested that he run to the house and see his mother first. "She does not care where I go," he answered with a sneer, "provided I do not soil my clothes."

I took his hand in mine, and as we walked along I said: "Leonard, you should love and honor your mother; and if she has some ideas that are wrong, you should speak of them with sorrow, if you speak of them at all, and not with contempt."

"I suppose you are right, he answered, "I am sorry for the way I spoke. I know the Bible does say, "Honor thy father and mother," but—

He stopped short and said no more;

and we were both silent until we reached the church.

We found that the Sunday school had just closed, and leading my little friend up to the secretary of the school, I asked him to enroll his name on his book in class No. 3.

After a brief intermission, the congregation began to gather for church services.

Leonard came in with Van and May-Bell, and sat down by my side. He seemed very attentive during the services; and at the close, when the minister opened the doors of the church, and gave out a hymn, he held my book for me while I sang.

I knew that this was a trying hour for Van and little May-Bell, and prayed silently that God would give them courage to do their duty. When we were singing the last verse of the hymn, Van gave me an upward glance, and taking his sister's hand, he walked with her bravely up to the altar.

The usual questions were asked, and they answered them promptly and clearly; and when the minister laid his hands

upon their young heads, and gave them his solemn blessing, I glanced down at Leonard, and saw a tear fall from his eyes into the leaves of the open book before him.

When the services were ended, and the congregation was dismissed, I said to Leonard as we walked a little in advance of father and the children, "Leonard, you fell much better do you not?"

"I suppose I do," he answered, "but there is such a lump in my throat that almost chokes me and makes me cry."

"Something troubles you I expect. Tell me what it is." "I can not tell you. It is about my mother, of whom you said I must speak with reverence."

I studied a moment and then replied: "Perhaps it is a matter that I can help you in; and revealing it to me for that reason, would be no harm."

"Then I will tell you," he said. "When I saw your sister and brother join the church this morning, I wanted to go, too; but was afraid that mama would be displeased with me, and say that I was too young."

"Don't cry any more Leonard, but brighten up; and I promise you that I will go to see your mother, one day this week and ask her, myself, to let you join the church."

[We had now reached Mrs. Williams' house, and when I separated from Leonard at the gate, I was rejoiced to see his face wore a brighter expression.

True to my promise, I put on my hat this very morning to call on Mrs. Jennings in behalf of little Leonard.

Just as I was passing out at the gate, I felt a light touch on my shoulder, and then a hand was slipped through my arm. Looking quickly around, I beheld the smiling face of Mary Sanders. "I see that you have started on a mission," she said. "I came over to see you a few moments, but let me go with you, and that will do as well."

"I will be glad of your company," I replied, explaining the nature of my visit.

"Ah!" she said, "I fear it will be a fruitless effort. Mrs. Jennings is extremely worldly."

"Be not fearful, but believing." Let

us go in the strength of the Lord, and we will have victory."

A short walk brought us to our destination, and as we passed up the broad avenue, in front of the house, I beheld with admiration, the beautiful building that loomed up before me; for it was all that a summer residence required for comfort and luxury.

We ascended the steps, and were about to ring the door bell, when I heard voices at the far end of the broad veranda. I looked in that direction, and saw through a lattice work of vines and flowers, Mrs. Williams and her visitor engaged in conversation. Observing us, Mrs. Williams came forward and making me acquainted with Mrs. Jennings, she invited us to be seated.

I recognized at once, that my mission was a difficult one, as I beheld the subject of it, seated on a low ottoman, with her head reclining gracefully against the arm of a rustic bench. She was arrayed in a morning robe, profusely adorned with lace and ribbon, and as the faint, sweet odor from a jar of heliotrope at



her side filled the atmosphere around her, her fair shapely fingers toyed idly with the lilac colored blossoms.

Alas! poor little woman! I could see at a glance, that the world was her god.

"Mrs. Jennings," I said after a few remarks had been made upon different subjects, "perhaps you will be surprised when I tell you the object of my visit here this morning. Your little son went with me yesterday to Sunday school; and on our return, he told me that he wanted very much to join the church; but was afraid that you might object to it on account of his age. I promised him that I would come myself to see you, and intercede for him. May I do so?"

"I assure you Miss Arlington," she replied, "that there is no need of an intercessor at all. My son is a member of the church already, with the exception of confirmation; and if he wants to be confirmed, I suppose he is old enough for that. I agree to it heartily; and will take him home next Sabbath, and have the ceremony performed."

I am so glad that dear Leonard will

have his desire granted; and I hope that he will be pleased with the church of your choice. I love the Episcopal Church, and revere it as the mother of my own. Her doctrines are pure and good. It is her membership that is largely permeated with worldliness—not she.”

Mrs. Jennings stared at me with surprise. “Explain yourself,” she said.

“You can not deny, dear Mrs. Jennings,” I said, “that the membership of the Episcopal Church, to a large extent, is very worldly. Of this, you can judge, by the pomp and vanity displayed in dress, and worldly amusements. This is also true of other denominations at the present day, but to a somewhat less extent.”

“I can not see that it is any harm for people to dress just as well as they are able to,” she replied.

“It is wrong dear madam, because the Bible condemns it. The Bible condemns it, because it is the natural fruit of a carnal mind; and because the money employed in this useless display, would build orphans’ homes for the poor, and send

the gospel to the heathen." Taking a small Testament from my pocket, I turned to the 2nd chapter of 1st Timothy, and 9th verse, and read aloud: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair, or gold or pearls, or costly array; but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works."

"I did not know that was in the Bible," said Mrs. Jennings. "I have never seen it in the 'Prayer Book.'"

"Miss Arlington," put in Mrs. Williams, will you please tell me your views on sanctification? It is a subject that is exciting some interest at the present, and I believe you profess it, do you not?"

"I do, and will explain it with pleasure; for it is a theme upon which I delight to speak. Sanctification is perfect love. Perfect love breeds perfect desires to render perfect obedience. However, as our judgment will always be *imperfect* we are liable to make *mistakes*, which is not *imputed sin*."

"Do you mean," she said, "that when

you have perfect love, you are then at a standstill, and can not improve?"

"I mean that we can not improve on the quality, but most assuredly we can on the quantity. In other words, perfect love is but the seed of grace, which when sown in a clean heart, naturally germinates into a healthy growth—indeed we can not have a healthy growth in grace, until we attain to it."

Mrs. Jennings was paying very strict attention while I spoke, and when I had finished, she said, "I never understood it before, in the light you explain it."

"Nor I," said Mrs. Williams. "If that is sanctification, it would be well if everybody had it."

"Oh! Leonard, what have you been doing, that you have soiled your clothes so badly?" exclaimed his mother, as the boy stood in the doorway—his clean white linen suit besmeared with dirt and water.

"Nothing," he replied, "but I just found a bunch of flock plants that someone had pulled up and thrown away. I fixed me a flower jar and planted them in it for my own, and set it in our win-

dow. Miss Arlington, I see that you have come according to promise." As he spoke, he drew near my side and slipped his fingers into mine.

"My son has fallen very much in love with you, Miss Arlington," said his mother. "He talks of nothing since he met you, but your kindness in carrying him to Sunday school and preaching, where he saw the little children join the church; and the kind minister that laid his hands upon their heads and blessed them. I am glad that he has found something to interest and divert his mind from pet dogs and dead goslings."

"Leonard," I said, your mother has granted your wish, and says that next Sunday she will take you home and have you confirmed in the Episcopal Church."

The boy's countenance fell in an instant. "I want to join the church that we went to yesterday; where you, and the little boy and girl belong. Dear mama, please let me join Miss Arlington's church, for I believe she can teach me to be happy and good."

"Do Lucia," said Mrs. Williams, "let the child join wherever he wants too, and don't throw him into one of his gloomy spells again, that makes him as solemn as a graveyard. It will not hurt him, and it may pacify him for awhile. Do let him have his way."

"Mrs. Williams," said Leonard manfully, "my fretting days are over, I hope; and while I would like very much to join Miss Arlington's church, yet I am willing to do as mother says."

"O Auntie! I could not help clasping his little hand more tightly as it lay in mine, while I said for his encouragement. "Dear Leonard, you are exactly right. Do as your mother wishes, and God will love you the more."

As we were leaving, Mrs. Williams followed us to the steps, saying, "come again—both of you. I have enjoyed your visit and feel that it has done me good."

"Theodora," said Mary as we walked home together, "did not our hearts burn within us?" Through faith you have gained a victory, my dear."

"Yes," I replied, "and it was by faith,

you remember, that the walls of Jericho fell down. That reminds me—how is yours since I saw you last?”

“That is just what I came to tell you about, when I met you on your mission. My faith is strengthening; and I have passed through an experience lately that has proven so helpful to me, and I want to tell you about it. When I left your house that morning, we prayed in your room and the Lord so sweetly sanctified me. I went away on wings—Oh! I can not express the love that burned in my heart. It went on thus for several days until temptation began to sweep upon me like a deluge; and gradually I began to have less feeling. Now let me explain my mistake; for I see it now. I called this *feeling*, the witness of the spirit, and when it would fluctuate, I would become alarmed, and think that I was losing the witness of my deliverance from all sin. However, I was so fixed in my determination never to turn back, that I would get up in the night and pray until the *good feeling* would come back. But I would not be long in bed, until I would

again feel a heaviness instead of a lightness of heart. Satan suggested that I was losing the blessing; and so I would arise again, and pray with more earnestness than ever. The thought came to me to search the Scriptures; and I did so. The first words that my eyes rested upon when I opened the Bible, were these: "Wherefore ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptation, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ." 1st Peter, 6-7.

"Ah! then," I thought, "this is but a trial of my faith and something to rejoice over and not to mourn over. And *feeling* is not the thing to depend upon; for the wind bloweth where it listeth; but glory to God! my dependence is in *Thee*, and I will go on *believing* ever—*feeling* or *no feeling*. Oh! then I could sing 'Sweet Deliverance;' for my heart was full of sunshine again, and has been



ever since. Theo, I have learned more about *faith*, during the short little time that I have enjoyed the blessing of perfect love, than in all my past experience of religion. Why! why! is the church so silent on the subject?"

"Yes," I replied, "it is truly a *living* faith that sweetly works by love and purifies the heart." But why did you not come to see me, when you were in so much trouble? I think I might have helped you, for I have experienced the same difficulties that you speak of. Mrs. Comer is a dear mother in Israel, to teach young babes in Christ. She has helped me over some rough places, and O I shall always love her for it."

"I did not come for the simple reason, that poor mama took it into her head, that I was sure to lose my mind if I did not keep away from your influence, and said that my visits to you must cease at once. That very night Brother Jefferies came home from a prospecting trip to northwest Georgia, and surprised us all with the news, that since he had left home, God had wonderfully saved him

at a holiness meeting while out there. 'I went away from home,' said he, 'to seek a place to locate and settle for life; but instead, I found a place to locate my soul; and that safe and everlasting abiding place is Christ. Mother! he continued, 'please let us erect a family altar in our home; and every night and morning let us meet around it, and pray for and with each other. It would be such a blessing to us, don't you think?'

Mother was deeply moved, and replied, with the tears streaming from her eyes, 'Go on son, and may God pity and forgive my proud heart that must now be humbled, and made willing to learn of my children the lessons which I ought to have taught them years ago.' This morning she came to me and said, that she supposed that she was wrong in forbidding me to visit you; and that if I chose, I might go to see you as usual.'"

"Mary," I said triumphantly, "you make me feel like singing Aunt Rachie's song—'Shout on—Pray on, we are gaining ground.'"

"God bless Aunt Rachie," said Mary,

laughing till the tears ran down her cheeks. We walked on in silence for awhile, then Mary broke the stillness. The joy and gladness had faded from her face, and her tones were very sad as she said, "Poor little Leonard!"

"Why?" I enquired.

"O well," she answered, I was thinking of the spiritually cold atmosphere with which he'll be surrounded when he joins the Episcopal Church. Darling, I don't want to say anything wrong, but you know that the ballroom, theater, card clubs and most all kinds of worldly amusements are allowed and indulged in by Episcopalians."

"Yes," that is true," I replied, "but do you know that the same leaven of worldliness is permeating all of the Christian denominations? It is fearful to think of it. We have a good pastor here now; and he feels the responsibility and burden of the church, and feels it keenly. I can see that he does. I would to God that all pastors feel it as sensibly, but they do not. The leaven of sin has reached the pulpit as well as

the pew. I tremble to think of it and what the outcome will be. God knows and let us leave it with Him."

"I will—I do," she cried, "But these burning words come down to us through the ages: 'Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.'"

"Amen. Let God have His way," I said, "But Oh! the comfort in these words: 'Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.' But we must separate here as this little path leads right up to our gate, and I've been gone so long. Good bye my darling, and pray for me."

I hope I have not tired you dear Auntie with so long a letter.

Your loving,

THEODORA.

CHAPTER IX.

Browse Hill, July 5, 18—

Mrs. Lucy Grey.

My dear Aunt: They are all here at last. I mean John and Richard, and a Mr. George Holland, a school chum of theirs, whom they have invited home with them to spend the summer holidays. I do not like his looks at all. His air is too swaggering and careless. Richard says that he expects to have a "swell time" with him and expects to take him every where. Poor, dear boy! I fear that those inclinations to sow wild oats, will get the best of him yet. He drew me aside this morning, and said in an undertone, "Little sister, do talk about something else besides Sunday school and prayer-meeting; and wear a more lively expression. George is a fellow that likes spirit in a girl, and I've been counting on you to help make his stay here as pleasant to him as possible. You know brother will not do anything but pore over books in the library."

"Listen to me Richard," I replied, laying my hand on his arm, "if this young 'fellow' as you call him, is so easily bored with subjects that dear mama has taught us to love, then I think he is no suitable companion for you. Dear Richie, take heed in time and beware of him."

"Oh! I see already that it will not do to depend upon you; and worse still—you'll be making him mad with some of your plain speeches, I'll bet."

With this, he turned on his heels and left me. I heard him blow his hunting horn in a short time, and knew that he and his companion were probably gone for the day.

At noon they had not returned. Three o'clock came, and in a short while I heard their voices at the gate, and then their step in the hall.

"I'm as hungry as a wolf," said Richard. "Have you anything cold to eat, sister?"

"As soon as I can fix it on the table," I answered; for I had put away a dainty little dinner for them with my own hands and as I arranged it upon the table I

thought thus: "I will do it as nicely as I can, and with a willing and cheerful heart; for I wish to show Richard, that although he spoke unkindly to me before he left, I forgive him freely and love him in the same old way. He lingered at the table after his guest had eaten and left the dining room. He seemed restless as though something was weighing on his mind. "Little sister," he said at last, "it was kind of you saving us some dinner, and serving it up so nicely; when, as for my part, I don't deserve a swallow for the way I treated you this morning. I do hope that you will forget all about it, for I am heartily ashamed of myself."

"Of course I do, you dear old boy, and am so glad to know that you do not wish to remain angry with me. Oh! I shudder to think of sharp words, and unkind feelings, coming between and estranging us from each other. Please don't go out this evening, but get your friend and come to the library with the family; and let us have a quiet and pleasant evening at home."

"I will if that will gratify you and make up for my past rudeness, you sober little puss."

"Poring over books as usual," said he to John, as he entered the library with his friend that evening after tea. "What author is it this time, that rivals Holland and myself—depriving us of your company and causing us to fish and hunt alone? Is it Shelly, Tennyson or Longfellow? But I would rather think, from the twinkle in your eye, that Charles Dickens had been tickling your risibles."

"Washington Irving is your rival this time, if you please to put it that way; but it was not he, or any other, that was amusing me when you entered, for my mind was not on my book. The book, it is true called up pleasant recollections from the past, and these recollections made me forget my subject. I was thinking of our childhood, Richard, when you and I wore knee pants, and went to the village school—splashing through every mudhole on the way, like wild colts and one particular occasion of these happy bygone days, brought the twinkle to my



eyes that you spoke of—if indeed it was a twinkle. It seems to me that it ought to have been a tear; for my mind was absolved with a sweet and sacred memory, and yet it was a memory that would make one laugh as well as cry.”

We were all eager to hear the story, and he began by saying: “Sister, do you remember a little blue gingham apron that mother made for you when you were very small? and how funny you looked in it because it was too little for you? At any rate you had just such an one; and was the proudest little girl I ever saw in a new apron.

“Rich and I were ashamed for you to wear it to school; because it looked so funny and awkward, and insisted that mother should make you take it off. Mother smiled and tried to persuade you not to wear it, promising that she would make you another that would fit you better. But no! There you stood in the doorway, school bucket in hand, ready to start! looking, as I thought, so ridiculous that I was almost ready to cry.

“Let’s hold her and take it off” suggest.

ed Richard when we had started, and was about a hundred yards from the house. "Good." I answered. "But you were too fast for us. Down the road you flew at the top of your speed! Screaming and calling to mother for help. It is needless to say that we got a genteel thrashing that night. But the best of the whole thing was that after mother had whipped us, you burst into tears yourself, saying that mother had whipped us too hard. I never felt so mean in all my life. To think! that I had imposed on one that loved me and was my friend. Since then, I have had a tenderer love for my little sister."

John was sitting by me and as he finished speaking, he drew the garment from my fingers that I was finishing for little Clair, and asked me to give them some music. I was glad to do so and went to the piano. "What will you have?" I said, playing a prelude.

"Perhaps Mr. Holland has a choice," he answered.

"Thanks," he said, "I would like to hear—Miss Arlington render that delight-

ful and entrancing waltz, The Beautiful Blue Danube."

"Now Mr. Holland," I objected smiling kindly, "please excuse me. I don't play waltzes you know. Might make you want to dance. See?"

He seemed a little puzzled and so I explained: "When I was a little girl, I professed religion and wanted to join the church. Dear mama, in her thorough-going way, got down the old church discipline, and read the general rules to me—explaining them in a simple way. One of them was not to sing those songs or read those books which do not tend to the love and knowledge of God. So that is why I do not play worldly music. I am trying to be true to my vows."

Poor Richard bit his lips and frowned; but seeming to recollect himself, he smothered his chagrin and said, "George, my sister is a primitive Methodist. All that is lacking is the straight gown and poke bonnet. But I know what she will play, and it's a favorite with us all."

Turning a few leaves he found the hymn which I played—John and he as-

sisting in the singing with their fine strong voices.

“There’s a dear and precious book,  
     Though it’s worn and faded now,  
 That recalls the happy days of long ago;  
     When I stood at mother’s knee  
 With her hand upon my brow,  
     And heard her gentle voice in tones  
         so low.

Chorus.

“Blessed book—precious book,  
     On thy dear old tear-stained leaves I  
         love to look,  
 Thou art sweeter day by day,  
     As I walk the narrow way  
 That leads at last to that bright home  
         above.

“There she read of Jesus’ love,  
     How He blessed the children dear—  
 How He suffered, bled and died upon the  
         tree.  
     Of His heavy load of care,  
 While she dried my flowing tear,  
     With her kisses as she said it was for  
         me.

"Well those days are passed and gone,  
But their memory lingers still,  
And the dear old book each day has been  
my guide.

And I seek to do His will  
As my mother taught me then  
And forever in my heart His words  
abide."

As I finished, I looked up and saw that Richard was in tears. No one noticed it, I think, but myself, and I sang the familiar lines of, "Ye must be born again," with a prayer in my heart for him.

"Let us now have my favorite," said father just as the last notes of the song had ceased. "Let's see," glancing at the clock, "it's the hour for family prayer, and we will use it for the evening hymn. Richard, take your seat at the table and conduct the services son."

"Excuse me father. I can not do as you wish—indeed I can not."

I had never known him to make this refusal before—indeed ever since he was a boy, father had called on him and

John at intervals to take his place at the family altar and they had complied without the least hesitation.

Now when Richard refused for the first time in his life, father gave him a look of surprise, which gradually changed to one of sadness. Turning to John, he motioned to him to take his seat at the table. He complied at once; and when he had read a portion of scripture he read the hymn that father had selected. As the solemn tones of the sweet old song rolled through the room, comfort came with them especially these lines:

“Fear not, I am with thee

Oh! be not dismayed.

I, I am thy God and will still give thee  
aid,

I'll comfort thee, help thee and cause  
thee to stand

Upheld by my righteous omnipotent  
hand.”

John's prayer, too, I will never forget. Oh, how he prayed for the sinner tossed to and fro by the waves of temptation and

sin. How he prayed for the guardian arm of the Father to draw them away from the surrounding dangers which threatened their eternal ruin. Then he prayed earnestly for God's work at large; and then for our own home, and lastly for himself, that he might be a more earnest and zealous Christian to serve his mission in the world.

When we parted for the night, I felt that we had had a profitable evening.

Good-bye auntie for this time.

Lovingly,

THEODORA.

## CHAPTER X.

Browse Hill, July 25, 18—.

Dear Auntie: Today has been one of trials, but as I began it on my knees I have had the advantage of my adversary. As soon as I awoke this morning the warfare started. It being Saturday, and the only day that the children can call their own, they wanted recreation of course, and asked might they go fishing. I knew that this would put me out a little about my Sunday preparation, to get them ready and off; but for their pleasure I thought I would make an extra effort, and consented, provided John and Richard would go too and take charge of them, (Mr. Holland, their friend, having run up to the city for the day). They consented; and in the midst of a confused helter-skelter for hooks and lines, I escaped to the kitchen to prepare them a lunch. Recollecting all at once, that I had not put up any yeast for lightbread, and fearing that it might be too late to rise if I put it off any longer, I dropped



everything else to attend to it. When I had completed that task, and placed the yeast in the sun to rise, I was about to return to the children's lunch, when Van entered the kitchen with an oyster box of bait in one hand, and his fishing hook and line dragging behind him. "Sister, there is a woman at the gate," said he, "and she wants to know if you will buy any apples." I was about to say, "No," for it seemed that I had no time to see her, but second thought suggested that they would be needed in making pies for Sunday. As I passed out of the kitchen to attend to it, my dress caught in Van's hook, and it was full five minutes before I could get away. Amidst these, and many other difficulties, I at last dispatched my merry little crowd; and was thinking that I could now go on with my Sunday cooking without interruption, when came a knock at the door, and in answer to my "come in," Lucy Perryman's little sister Ida entered. Glancing at the Sunday school quarterly in her hand, I remembered having promised to assist her in learning the lesson.

Satan suggested that no one had so much to bear as I, when immediately the encouraging words of a dear old hymn, came fresh to my mind.

“Soul, then know thy full salvation,  
Rise o’er sin, and fear, and care.  
Joy to find in every station,  
Something still to do or bear.”

“My gracious Lord, I will,” my soul responded. “Indeed I do—I do.” I bade Satan get behind me, and inwardly thanked God that I had these little crosses to bear for Him. “I’ll be ready in a few minutes Ida, dear,” I said. “Only wait like a good girl in the front room until I finish these pies.”

In a short time I had everything in the kitchen, in a condition for Aunt Rachie to finish and then I was ready to help Ida with her lesson.

Dear auntie, do you ever have days like these? For my part I rather enjoy them. I find that they strengthen my patience, and teach me sweet lesson of endurance. I remember too, having heard Brother Nathan, our pastor, say a few Sundays

ago in his sermon, that there was something sublime in a great sorrow, which rendered it easier to bear, but that it was the petty annoyances of our everyday life, that make up our sorest trials; and therefore when endured for Christ's sake, served as our greatest helps in developing the Christian graces.

But these cloudy days are not entirely without sunshine; for every now and then I get glimpses of Jesus. Today when I left the heated kitchen, and took my seat with Ida in the cool sitting room, I felt that it was a sweet and refreshing privilege that my kind heavenly Father had prepared for me after the trials of the morning, to study the Sunday school lesson with her, and indeed it was a profitable one, and we both enjoyed it together.

After dinner when I had sung the baby to sleep, I laid down beside him on his little bed, and enjoyed a quiet nap. He woke up first, and when I opened my eyes he was rolling from one side to another, playing with his toes. He looked so sweet and cunning, that I felt I must have a

romp with him. He enjoyed it exceedingly; and when it was at its height the children arrived from their fishing expedition, and rushing into the room where I was, both held up a string of fish exclaiming: "Look what we have caught. Do, sister, have them for supper."

About that time John and Richie came in and said that they would dress the fish for me, for which I thanked them heartily.

After making Van and May Bell bathe and put on their clean clothes, I sent them to the library to study their Sunday school lesson. Then Aunt Rachie came in and wanted to know if she might have an early supper, as she wished to go to preaching. I said, yes, of course, and when supper was over, I attended to the cleaning off of the table and kitchen things that she might not be delayed. When I had finished, and joined the family in the sitting room, we were all tired, and after early prayers we retired to our rooms for the night, and so closed the day.

“He leadeth me, O blessed thought!  
O words with heavenly comfort fraught,  
Whate’er I do, where’er I be,  
Still ’tis God’s hand that leadeth me.”

July 28.—I must tell you before I close this letter, of a little occurrence of yesterday concerning the genuineness of Van’s conversion. I had bought some fine peaches in the morning and after giving the children as many as I thought they ought to eat at once, I put the rest away. In the evening when they came home from school, Van asked me might he go into the closet and get him one. I said, “Yes, and get May Bell one too.” That night at supper, I noticed that he ate but little and was not as cheerful as usual, and I asked him if he was sick. He answered, “Yes’m” in a choked voice, and began to cry. When supper was over I carried him to his room to put him to bed, asking him what hurt him. He evaded my question, and undressing quickly, jumped into bed.

“What? Retire without saying your prayers! That will not do,” said I. He

arose and fell on his knees beside the bed, but was silent. "Why don't you go on with your prayers buddie?" I asked.

At this he burst into tears afresh, and said in broken sentences: "I can't pray. I've tried, and God won't help me a bit. Oh! oh! He's angry with me. Oh!—I know He is, and I know what it's about. Oh! oh! oh! I've done something wrong and lost my religion. Oh! o-h!"

"My poor, dear, little fellow!" I said, "What is it that you have done? Tell sister that she may pray for you."

"Oh! it's so awful bad," he sobbed. "I've stolen—that is what it is—and God is angry with me. This evening when you gave me the closet key, and told me to get only one peach for me, and one for 'Bell, I got two for myself instead of one, and hid them in my pocket—and now I can't pray, for God is angry with me because I have stolen, and I've lost my religion. Oh! sister I am so sorry—I never will do it again—indeed I never—never will."

I clasped him to my heart and kissed his tear-stained little face, while tears

rained from my own eyes. "My dear little brother," I said, "how glad I am that it wounds you conscience to sin. It was very wrong I know, to take the peach, but God sees that you are heartily sorry, and He will forgive you I know."

"Oh yes!" he said, his face brightening up. "I'd forget all about that—but how long first you reckon?"

"Why He forgives you now, because you've repented; but I think you ought to get down on your knees, and acknowledge it all to Him—promising never to do so again."

So he dropped on his knees beside his little bed, and in his own original way said:

"O Lord, you know all about that peach I stole to-day, for you saw me, and got angry with me about it. But now I am ever so sorry, and you know that too, and have forgiven me; but I thought I ought to tell you all about it for respect sake and promise never, never, never to do so again. Amen."

O auntie! that the wise and prudent

were as quick to believe God and take  
Him at His word!

(With other duties pressing upon me,  
I close for this time. As ever,

THEODORA ARLINGTON.



## CHAPTER XI.

Browse Hill, Aug. 11, 18—

Dear Auntie: Our church is having a revival of wonderful power. Our beloved pastor, Brother Nathan, is assisted in the meeting by a holiness evangelist, who is, without doubt, endued with power from on high. I have never seen the church at this place so wide-awake, and up-and-doing. It is just wonderful what a stir there is. Brother Nathan says that he has been an earnest seeker of sanctification for ten years, but has never, until at this meeting, understood it in its true light. Dear precious man of God. How sweet to see him humble himself as a little child seeking it at the altar just as others. He obtained it in the early part of the meeting and now urges it upon the church most zealously. Verily his sermons glow with holy fire.

Mr. Williams and his whole family are deeply interested; and also Mrs. Jennings, I know that you will rejoice to

learn, that Mrs. Sanders professed religion at the altar night before last. I heard her say in the experience meeting this morning, that although she had been a member of the church for years, she was only now beginning to feel as Christians say they do.

George Holland, Richie's school chum, has left for his home in Kentucky. The town was getting too hot for him. As he would not let the meeting be a benefit to him, I am glad that he left, on account of his influence over Richard; although Richard will not attend the meeting even now that he is gone, but keeps to himself and seems moody and morose. This morning when I came home from church, and found him shut up in his room—all alone—I begged him to attend the meeting with us and try to do better. "O Buddie," I pleaded, "what would dear mama say if she could see you now. What has changed you so?. You seem to have forgotten the precepts and examples of Christian parents. Come back to Jesus, dear, He loves you so."

His brow darkened; and pushing my hand from off his arm, he said, more sternly than he had ever spoken to me before, "Sister, let me tell you now, once for all, never say religion to me again as long as you live, for I am heartily sick of the subject."

"Pardon me this time, and I'll not trouble you again," said I, leaving the room, and inwardly resolving to be as good as my word. "However," I thought, "he can not hinder me from praying for him."

In the afternoon, I took my sewing and went to the library. As I seated myself by a window that opened on the veranda, I saw father and John engaged in conversation. "What business do you expect to follow, son?" I heard father say. "Or have you given the subject any thought as yet?"

"I have given a great deal of thought," John replied, "but have not decided yet what I shall do. I have for the present, however, engaged to work for the firm of Brooks and Brothers in C., and should have mentioned it to you be-

fore. I will leave on the 25th, as I have promised to be on hand the first of next month, and must stop over for a few days in H."

"Do you have any idea," continued father, what Richard expects doing?"

"I heard him say last week, that he wanted to buy the place that Harry Holcomb used to own, and farm next year. I believe farming suits him well enough."

Dear father! he is anxious about the boys I know. Richard, of course, is a source of trouble to him, on account of his waywardness; and John is, I believe, resisting an inward monitor that says, "Go teach all nations." I have reasons to believe this, although he has never directly confided to me his feelings on the subject. For this cause, perhaps, the meeting has been of no more benefit to him; although he attends, and seems rejoiced to see the good work going on.

August the 15th: O dear Auntie, I have such good news to tell you. Richie was joyfully converted last night about midnight; and woke us all up with shouts of praise, and exclamations of victory. All

the evening, he said, he had been burdened with a load of sin and guilt, and had not slept; but remained in his room struggling in prayer for deliverance. Praise the Lord! about 12 o'clock it came, and his joy was so full, that his soul could not contain it. His experience was a wonderful one; and I will tell it to you just as near as I can, in his own language as he told it to us this morning after family prayers, when we were all gathered in the sitting room together.

"About three weeks ago," he said, "as I was riding over to the Holcomb farm, a heavy thunder storm came up just as I neared the house; and as I have always from boyhood been afraid of wind and lightning, I put my horse in the stable, and hurried into the house as quickly as I could—only to find, of course, every door under lock and bolt, as the house has been vacant for some time. I stood on the veranda for shelter however, and as each tempestuous wave of wind and storm beat against the old house—almost lifting it from its foundation, my heart would beat with dread and apprehension. I thought

of my wicked life, and what little excuse I could give for it, as I had been reared so religiously. I suppose this thought rendered the storm more frightful to me, which was growing more and more furious every minute. 'I believe if I could find a place to hide, I would say my prayers,' I thought. But that moment, a bright flash of lightning, followed instantly by a loud clap of thunder, brought me at once to my knees. 'O Lord!' I cried, 'if you will only let the storm abate, I will never rest until I'm a converted man.' O, wondrous miracle of love! I had not been off my knees five minutes, before I could see a change in the weather; and in an hour's time, the sun was actually shining.

"I attended to the business I went to see about, and saddling and mounting my horse, I started home. As I rode along and reflected on all that had occurred I began to say to myself. 'How strange that the storm abated when I prayed! But pshaw! it was going to clear off anyway. What a fool I was to get frightened as I did! I wonder if anybody saw

me praying.' Thus I reasoned right in the face of God's mercy.

"About two weeks after that, I had business at the farm again. I noticed when I started from home, that some threatening clouds were visible in the sky, and by the time I reached the Holcomb place the heaviest storm I ever was in, was raging so furiously that it seemed I would almost be blown from my horse. I again sought the veranda for shelter; and while I remembered the scorn with which I had treated my miraculous escape two weeks before, and the vow I had made on that occasion and had not kept, I felt that God's wrath was justly kindled against me, and each flash of lightning was a visible manifestation of it. I once again, and this time, more earnestly than ever, promised the Lord that if He would spare me, I would never stop seeking until I was saved. Miraculously as before, the storm abated; and I went home, convinced that there was a God, and one who heard and answered prayer.

"After that I was true to my promise—

indeed I was afraid not to be—and went to work in the best way I knew how, to get salvation. I thought that I would get it myself, and say nothing to anyone else about it. I tried this plan until I grew weary and heavy laden; and at last got to the point where I would like for some one to talk with me, if they would raise the subject themselves. I had snubbed little sister until she had become mute with me on the subject; and one evening as the church bells were ringing for services, I sat by her on the steps of the veranda, and hoped in vain that she would ask me to go with her. I continued in this distressing condition of mind, until yesterday evening, when I could stand it no longer and asked John to please let us go into our room and pray. There I remained until midnight on my knees. When I had let go the last thing that bound my affections to earth. I felt my soul rise, as it were, on wings; while I gave God the praise and cried ‘Strong Deliverer!’ ”

When Richard had finished speaking father said, “Son, you speak of the foes



you had to conquer before you could obtain pardon. Which was the strongest?"

"My own self will," replied Richie, "which prompted me to have my own way about my future avocation. This was the hardest thing I had to give up. I felt that in becoming a follower of Christ, I must preach the gospel. No doubt the announcement will surprise you all; but I have promised the Lord, that I would follow where He led; and the ministry of the word, is the channel through which I must henceforth serve him."

Astonishment was written on every face in our little group, for who had dreamed that our wild, fun-loving Richie would ever be a preacher? Nevertheless, while there was astonishment on every face, it soon melted into pure joy and delight, for we were glad to give him for so noble a cause.

I said every face wore an expression of joy and delight at the announcement of this glad news; but I will take that back. Poor John's was shrouded in gloom. For had not Richard's experience convicted him afresh, that he also should submit

to the same divine calling? He was very restless, and in a little while he arose and left the room.

As for myself, my heart was so full of gratitude and praise, that I came up here to my room, to pour it out at the feet of Jesus. But my heart was not so full of joy for Richard, as to feel no sorrow for John; for I well understood the great conflict in his bosom.

As ever, your own,

THEODORA.

CHAPTER XII.

Browse Hill, August 19, 18—

My dear Aunt: Our meeting has closed with wonderful success. As long as it continued after Richard's conversion, he spared no effort to promote its interest by exhortation, prayer, and private talk. Oh! how it rejoices my heart to see the change which God hath wrought in him

Dear John has gone to take his position in the house of Brooks and Brothers in C. Poor boy! He grew more and more restless every day he stayed after Richard's profession of a call to the ministry—indeed he seemed in so much haste towards the last, that he declared he would be compelled to go a day earlier than he had at first thought. He has gone; but I trust that God will surely bring him, as he did Jonah, to his Nineveh at last.

Yesterday was Richard's birthday, which I celebrated by giving a dinner, and inviting a few guests. I took especial

pleasure and delight in trying to make it an occasion of joy to every member of the household.

I think dear old Aunt Richie did also, for she assisted all she could in preparing the table, and even in decorating the house with flowers and evergreens, she insisted on doing a part in her clumsy way. "Please, honey, let old Rachie do one little job all by herself," she said as the tears stood in her dim old eyes. Just let me hang these ivy wreathes around your ma's and John's pictures. Its a sign, you know, that though they are gone, they are not forgotten."

I assented by a nod of the head, for my heart was too full for utterance. Dear old friend! You shall not be forgotten when you are gone; and if I am living then, I will place with my own hands, flowers on your grave.

I think that our efforts to make the day one of pleasure to all, were not fruitless. For even the children, who occupied one end of the dining room where a table was set especially for them, seemed to be enjoying themselves, and played the

host and hostess admirably, as they waited upon their little guests whom I had invited for their pleasure.

Later in the day when most of the guests had gone, and while father and Mrs. Comer were having a lengthy discussion on church and Sunday school matters in the parlor, I joined Richard on the front gallery, where he and Mary Sanders were watching the children playing on the lawn. "What book is that you have, Mary?" I said seating myself beside her on the rustic bench?

"It is Wesley on Christian perfection," she replied. "I've been trying to convince your brother that conversion is not sanctification, nor sanctification, conversion; but that each are separate and distinct works, wrought in the heart by grace through faith."

"The greatest drawback to me in indorsing the doctrine of sanctification, as taught by you holiness people is, that you say consecration comes after conversion, and is the first condition of sanctification. Now according to my experience, consecration comes before conver-

sion, and on it conversion depends. I know that I failed to obtain pardon, until I made a consecration of all my hopes and future prospects to God."

"You have reference, I suppose, to your *consent* to become a minister of the Gospel," replied Mary.

"But there is quite a difference in consenting to be a minister, and in consecrating yourself to the work of a minister or any other work he may have you to do."

"If there is anything required of a minister of the Gospel, that I am not willing right now to do, I am sure I do not know what it is," replied Richard confidently.

"Let him alone, Mary," I said. "He can not see it now; but God will show it to him after awhile. I feel sure that He will."

Then I was reminded of my own experience, and of the great sacrifice I was called upon to make a few short months before; and all at once, the remembrance of an absent one, that had parted from me so ruthlessly, came fresh to my mind;

and a great longing to see him once again came over me. What had become of him? And was he still unhappy and rebelling against his fate? were the questions that arose in my mind and would not be hushed. I was about to retreat to the privacy of my room, to hide the tears which I felt welling up to my eyes, when Richard drew a sealed envelope from his pocket, and handing it to me, said, "Here is a letter which I have carried in my pocket for three days. Please pardon me; for I actually forgot to deliver it sooner."

I glanced at the address, and recognized at once, the familiar handwriting of Harry Holcomb. Overcome with joy I hurried to my room to read its contents. Toward the close it ran as follows: "When I parted from you about five months ago, I thought that my disappointment was greater than I could bear; and sought to forget it amid new scenes and new people. This effort, I soon discovered, was useless; and one Sabbath afternoon, while wandering through the cemetery of a suburban village, I was all

at once reminded of the little Testament you gave me when I saw you last. Taking it from my inside vest pocket, I began to read. Its precious pages brought relief and comfort to my soul, that travel and wandering had failed to do. From that day, I was led to seek a life of usefulness, and was not satisfied until I found a field of labor, and consecrated myself to the work. I know you will be glad to learn that, I am to serve God in the foreign missionary fields, and bright winged hope whispers to me, that one day you will be my very own, and we will go hand in hand in this great and good work together. You see that I have not given you up, nor do I feel that I ought.

"I am studying very hard to fit myself for usefulness in the field of labor to which I have been called; but spend most of my spare moments from study, in a little mission work which I have found in the slums and alleys of this great city. Indeed my convictions call me to missionary work altogether. Pray for me Theodora that I may achieve



something for Jesus; and that my faith may grow brighter with constant exercise in His service. Write to me, and good bye until I see you.

Harry."

When I finished, I dropped the letter as though its leaves were infected with poison; and quietly kneeling, I prayed that God would hush the daring hope that was beginning to throb in my bosom; and that he would blot out from my memory forever, every word of the letter that had awakened it there. For had not God placed me at my post of duty—in my father's home and was I not satisfied? Yea truly, for indeed each little homely duty done in Jesus' name however obscure and seen sometimes by no eye but His, brought satisfaction and the sweetest peace. Praise His name! And now at this post of duty I resolved to stay unless removed by His own guiding hand. And so I left the matter with Him.

September the 1st. O Auntie! the good work goes on so fast, that I can hardly

find time to write it down. Brother Nathan paid us a pastoral visit a few days ago, and unfolded a glorious plan of evangelizing the towns and villages on his circuit. He wants all the Christian workers of the church, to meet him on the streets on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, for the purpose of holding services for the benefit of those who will not go to church. The nature of these meetings, he says, will be a combination of all sorts—preaching, exhortation, testimonies, prayers and praise.

“A most excellent plan,” said papa, to which I added, “The very idea.” And looking to Richard to hear his approval, I was not much surprised (knowing that the test was very severe to a young unsanctified Christian), to see his face wear an expression of slavish fear, instead of joy at the suggestion. “Now” I thought, “he will see that he is not consecrated to the work of the ministry, for this is a sure test.”

“What do you think of this plan, Richard?” said Brother Nathan, addressing him.

"Indeed I am not prepared to answer you," he replied. "It must be a good one, and yet it does not exactly suit my feelings. But perhaps it is my feelings that are not right—in fact, I believe that that is the difficulty, since there is something in them akin to that old slavish fear I felt at the Holcomb farm a few weeks before my conversion, when I prayed that the storm would abate, and then imagined with shame that some one had seen me on my knees. Sister, I am beginning to believe that you and Miss Sanders were right in saying that I was not consecrated to my work nor entirely dead to the world."

"Then you can find no better time to make the consecration, and be crucified with Christ, than right now," I said.

"Yes, 'Now is the accepted time,' " said Brother Nathan. "I wish to have prayer with the family before I leave, and when we kneel, lay yourself for usefulness, on the altar; and we will unite in an earnest prayer, that God will accept the offering and sanctify the gift."

After prayer when we arose from our

knees, papa asked Richard if he had the witness that the work was done.

"No," he answered, "Yet I am resolved, that I will henceforth join you and Brother Nathan, not only in this, but in every good work for the Master, regardless of the world."

"My precious boy," said father, "if that is your offering, be sure God accepts it. He may withhold the evidence to try your faith for awhile; but be steadfast and immovable in your consecration, and the Spirit will surely bear witness to the work sooner or later.

The news of Brother Nathan's plan of holding street services the following Saturday, spread throughout our little town, and even into the country, so that by the appointed time, the largest congregation that he had ever preached to since he began to serve in the work, met in eager whispering groups, on the corner of Court Street, many of them, no doubt, to see for themselves "what that crazy preacher was going to do."

The life-giving strains of the Battle Song rose on the air, from a deep but

mellow bass voice which I recognized at once. It was Richard who was singing, and he came forward, book in hand and said: "We want every member of the church—no matter what your denomination may be—who are out and out for Christ, to come up near where we stand; for we need your help in exhortations, testimonies, prayers and songs."

There were quite a number that had professed holiness at our late revival meeting, that now came forward with easy freedom—consenting by their actions to help in any way they could, to carry on the good cause for which Christ died.

Brother Nathan was standing near me, and in answer to my look of inquiry, he whispered that Richard had consented to preach his first sermon, after which, he (Brother Nathan) would conclude the services. My heart did truly rejoice; and there went up a prayer from it, that God would endow him with heavenly wisdom.

He selected as a text, Romans 10:10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth,

confession is made unto salvation." His discourse, though short, was to the point, and very impressive. Toward the close he said: "We can not please God without an open confession of Him on our part. This has been my experience since I have begun to serve Him. When I was seeking salvation, and my heart was all burdened with sin and guilt, I could not find relief until I became willing for the world to know it, and then to seek light and aid from the people of God. Again, a few days ago, after placing myself and all that I owned upon the altar of God to be used in His service in any way that seemed good in His sight, I felt no evidence that my offering was accepted until I began to talk in your hearing this afternoon, and make an open confession of the same. And now, praise the Lord! I feel the holy fire is kindling. I say again that this has been my experience—that to please God, we must confess Him before men, and glory to His holy name! I am not ashamed, nor afraid to confess Him. And though crosses and trials, tribulation and an-

guish, pain and sorrow come, yet will I exclaim with triumph "Who is able to separate us from the love of God?"

As Richard closed, Brother Nathan came forward; and after relating something of his own experience, said that the meeting was now open for all who would give in their testimony as witnesses for Jesus.

Father was the first to speak; and as he proceeded, his words of glad testimony, changed to shouts of joy and praise.

"O for a thousand tongues to sing!" was the hymn that followed—joined by a concourse of spiritual voices.

To the great surprise of every one, Mr. Williams arose and asked for the prayers of the Christian people. This had a powerful influence, and many others followed the example, after which, testimonies, shouts and songs followed in rapid succession. It was indeed, a most beneficial and enjoyable occasion, which lasted until half past 5 o'clock when Brother Nathan closed the services with prayer and thanksgiving, leaving an appointment for the next day (which was

the Sabbath), at the same hour, and the same place.

The glorious effect of this meeting was shown the next day, at the regular services in the church, by fifteen accessions; among whom, to my great joy and delight was Lucy Perryman and her husband.

Now dear Auntie I will close for this time.

Yours, as ever,

THEODORA.



CHAPTER XIII.

Browse Hill, Nov. 26, 18—

Dear Aunt: I received a long letter from John yesterday, saying that his health was very much impaired and his physician had advised him to go north.

He wrote that he expected to start the next day for Michigan in company with Mr. Brooks and family.

"Mr. Brooks," he wrote, "is a man that commands my profoundest respect, for he is in every sense a Christian gentleman. His good wife and his noble daughter, Miss Salome, have been both a mother and a sister to me; and during my feeble state of health, I have wanted for nothing that was in their power to provide.

"Away from home, and thrown among strangers as I am, I ought to exclaim, 'Surely the lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places.' But little sister, I am far from happy. Perhaps it is my bad health that makes me feel so; and then sometimes I am persuaded to believe that

my unhappiness causes to some degree my ill health. Pray for me, for I would to God, that I had your sweet, peaceful frame of mind tonight."

Poor boy! Why will he not yield his stubborn will to God? But he will in time I am confident, and then be as true and fixed to his duty as he is now opposed to it.

When I had read his letter, and shown it to papa, I went into the library; and taking from a shelf, a copy of Mr. Wesley on Christian Perfection, I asked papa to get a stamped wrapper at the post-office, and mail it to John for me.

I then went to the nursery where little Clair was taking his afternoon nap. I examined his clothing to see if he was warm enough clad, and decided that I would put flannels on him without delay. Why was this anxiety for him on my part? And what made me feel his little pulse, and note his breathing if it was regular? I had had a dream the night before that he died, and in my dream I went with him to the very portals of heaven; and after bathing his

little hands and feet with tears and kisses, a body of angels unloosed him from my tender clasp, and bore him away—away out of my sight.

I called Aunt Richie and asked her to take him when he waked, and put his little flannel under vest on him—next to his body, and to be very careful of his diet; and to keep him indoors, for the November winds were very gusty and raw.

I put on my hat and went down town, for I had a little shopping to do. As I was returning, Richard overtook me a few blocks from home, and tapping me on the shoulder, as he stepped up to my side, he said:

"I have something to tell you. Can you keep a secret?"

"Perhaps I can guess it. Try me and see."

"All right," he said, and in his own literal way of expressing himself, added. "Guess who's promised to marry me?"

"Mary Sanders?"

"Did she tell you?"

"Why of course not. But is it really true?" I exclaimed with delight.

"Yes," he said, "it is verily true, for her own pure lips have spoken it. But tell me—do you not think me a lucky fellow indeed?"

"Oh! Richard, that does not in the least express it. Indeed you are divinely blest. In the work you have chosen for life, that sweet girl will be a loving help-mate by your side to cheer and bless"

He then fell into a very thoughtful mood, and was silent until we reached home.

November the 30th. O Auntie, since I wrote you the above, we have been so sadly afflicted in own home. Indeed it pains me to write it down—that our little Clair is dead—Yes he's gone—never to brighten our home again with his loving presence. But safe, thank God! in the tender clasp of Him who carries the lambs in His bosom—

"Safe in the arms of Jesus."

Oh! I know something of those arms; for they have been my support through many a stormy blast, and now, how tenderly they are bearing me up in this sore affliction.

He was taken very sick on the night of the afternoon that Richard unfolded to me the joyful news of his engagement with Mary Sanders. When we arrived home that evening, we found a bright fire blazing on the hearth, and the children, who had returned from school, engaged in the beloved sport of childhood—parching pop corn before the fire.

May-Bell had strung a lot of it, and tying it together, had wound it around little Clair's neck, to his great delight. As he toyed with his beautiful necklace, Aunt Rachie, who sat in the opposite corner, patted her foot and bowed her head to him, with a broad grin of satisfaction on her wrinkled face.

Late in the night he was taken violently ill. It seems he must have eaten some of the corn or rather swallowed it whole, as he could not chew it, and it congested on his stomach throwing him into convulsions and he died in a short while.

It has been but a few days since we laid his little form in the family graveyard beside dear mama's; but oh! with

what speed have my thoughts traveled over the past few months that our home has been blessed with his loving presence! O Auntie! I am pricked to the heart with the thought, that I did not make his brief stay upon earth as joyous and bright as I might have done. I have often thought that if God should take away a member of our household, that I would not grieve, as I loved His will so much. But I did not understand then, that one could grieve, without rebellion. I do indeed shed tears over the loss of our darling; but thank God! they do not spring from any rebellion in my heart, but from a stream of suffering love, that will flow despite all I can do, and for which I feel no condemnation.

But now my blessed Savior comforts me with one bright recollection of the past. I am thinking of one lovely evening, a few weeks before he was taken sick, when I carried him out into the yard, and walked him up and down the lawn in front of the door. This was an exercise that he dearly loved, and I indulged him that evening until it was too late to keep

him out. He enjoyed it I know; for I remember as I walked him back and forth, that every now and then he would turn his little face up toward me, with such a grateful smile, and when, at last, I carried him into the house, he did not want to go.

Oh! how I regret that I did not give him this pleasure oftener! But now he is gone, and my arms are so empty, and my heart is so sad.

Dear Mrs. Comer, who has been like a mother to us in our affliction, says, that God crushes our hearts, to extract from them the sweet essence of praise. Glory to His name! He shall have naught, but praise from mine. I will not look back over mistakes that I can not remedy now, but will gather up the little lessons which I learn from them as I go, and press forward in my march to a brighter world.

May-Bell waked me up this morning, laughing in her sleep; and when she opened her eyes, she exclaimed with disappointment, "Where is he? Is he gone?"

"Who, my darling?" said I.

"Oh! nothing. I've been dreaming—



that's all. I thought I went to heaven's gate and peeped in—and Oh! what I saw! Ever so many angels—as bright as the sun—all round a high place with steps to it. I suppose it was the throne of God, for a man sat upon it with holes in his hands. Not far from the throne I saw an angel that looked like our little Clair. I know it was he; for all at once I was lifted up, and carried into the very midst of the throng, and set down right before him. When he saw me, he laughed just exactly as he used to when I came home from school, and he would be so glad to see me. Then I dreamed that every one of the angels clapped their wings and began to sing and play upon the harps they held in their hands. Not Frenchharps, sister, but harps with strings to them. The music was so sweet, that I laughed with joy, and the waked me me up and I found it was all a dream.”

O Auntie! I can not write more just now, but will finish my letter tomorrow.

December 1st: Richard will leave for conference tomorrow. This evening as



he was packing his valise, Van, who was watching him with interest, said in an undertone to May-Bell at his side: "I say Bell, I guess it'll not be very many years, before I'll be packing my valise to go to conference." My heart responded with a glad amen! Then I recollected having heard mama say at one time, that she had prayed that God would call all her boys to the ministry. Richard looked up at me and smiled; and when Van saw that he had been overheard, he turned a somersault on the floor, to hide his embarrassment.

"Van," said Richie, "don't be ashamed of that remark, but get up from the floor like a man; or you'll be a circus boy if you don't mind—instead of a preacher."

Later in the day—dear old Aunt Rachie is very feeble. She says she misses her baby, and will shortly be with him in glory. I have employed another servant, as she is unable to do anything at all. Pray for us and write soon to an afflicted household.

Yours as ever,

THEODORA.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Browse Hill, April 11, 18—

My dear Aunt: The past few winter months have sped by so rapidly, I can hardly realize that it is spring again. Nevertheless it is here with all its "birds and buds, and flowers."

Dear Auntie, there is such a swwet and quiet joy in my heart while I write, for God has blessed me exceedingly—yea more than usually falls to the lot of the weak and erring.

No doubt the announcement of one of the causes of my joy, will be a surprise to you, as it was quite unexpected to me. Father and dear Mrs. Comer—my mother's best friend while she was on earth, were quitly married last week in Mrs. Comer's home. Late in the afternoon of the same day, father brought her home, to preside, as she does with loving motherly interest over our stricken household.

We do not feel that she has taken mama's place—no one could ever do

that; but her coming to us at this time of bereavement and great sorrow, seems more like a benediction from God, than anything else.

Another source of joy that has come to us, is a long, precious letter from John, a portion of which I will quote to you. He says, "I have placed myself and all I have or ever expect to have, on the altar; and I'm not my own, and I don't want to be. So I can truthfully say from a full heart,

'I have lost myself in Jesus,  
I am sinking into God.'

"Oh! the depth and sweetness of the joy. I can never express. But dear little sister, I now understand how you feel."

Then again, Harry is coming home.

I don't know yet what my future will be. I am living a moment at a time. Should my Heavenly Father see best to take my present work from me, and broaden my field of usefulness, even though that work be far away from home and loved ones, His will, not mine, be done.

Late Saturday afternoon, while in the midst of these reflections, I put on my sunhat, and calling Van and May-Bell, we walked out to the cemetery.

Nature was arraying herself in her beautiful spring robe; and as we opened the large heavy gate, we stood a moment gazing with admiration on the beautiful, yet quiet scene in the City of the Dead. Careful hands left an expression of loving remembrance at almost every grave; for the air was heavy with the odor of flowers from queenly magnolia and jessamine, down to the little hyacinths, mignonettes and violets.

We picked our way through trailing vines and flowering shrubs till we reached the place of our darling dead. The children put the long-stemmed lilies which they had brought with them, in a vase at the head of mama's grave. They knelt down beside it and kissed the marble slab that marked her resting place. I fell on my knees beside them, while tears rained from my eyes. We heard father's step, and soon he was kneeling beside us while he spoke in undertone these

comforting words, "I am the resurrection and the life." And there in the gathering twilight on our knees, we renewed our vows to Him whose eye never slumbers. And now dear Auntie, before I close this letter, I will answer the question you asked me in your last one—may you have my letters published. I answer yes with all my heart; and though it may be a feeble effort to accomplish good, yet should it win one soul from the error of its way, or lead one weary pilgrim into the Beulah land, then I think it will not have proven an useless endeavor.

Your little girl,

THEODORA.

THE END.

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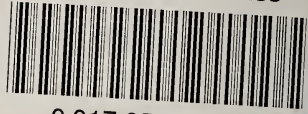
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